COLLECTED WORKS OF ERASMUS

VOLUME 15

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ERASMUS

LETTERS 2082 TO 2203

1529

translated by Alexander Dalzell

annotated by James M. Estes

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Preface

This volume contains the surviving correspondence of Erasmus for the first seven months of 1529 (6 January–7 August). Judging by the frequency of the references to it in the letters, the single most important event of those months was Erasmus' departure from Basel to settle in Freiburg.

Basel had been an important place in Erasmus' life since his original visit there in 1514–16. Since 1521 it had been his home, and he was attached to it. He had immediate access to the Froben press, the use of a fine house rented from Froben, free access to Froben's private garden, and daily contact with good friends. Basel was, moreover, safely remote from the seemingly endless warfare between Charles V and Francis I. On the other hand, the progress in Basel since 1526 of the Swiss version of 'Lutheranism' under the leadership of Johannes Oecolampadius had destroyed the liberal-reformist atmosphere that Erasmus had originally found so congenial. Though he was willing to live in a confessionally divided city with a tolerant regime, he was not willing to live in a place where Catholic doctrine and worship were officially proscribed, and he wanted Catholic princes and theologians to see clearly that such was the case. So, by the time the final victory of the reform party arrived in January–February 1529, to the accompaniment of public disorder and violent iconoclasm, Erasmus had long since decided to move elsewhere.[1]

But where should he go? The list of the places where he had been invited to settle on generous terms was far longer than the list of places that appealed to him. His unwillingness to become the courtier or partisan of any of the warring monarchs of Europe, to live in immediate proximity to hostile critics, or (at his age) to move to a far-off, unfamiliar place, had already caused him to turn down flattering invitations to settle in England, France,

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1 See Epp 2090 introduction, 2097 n1.

the Netherlands, Austria, and Poland.[2] He looked instead for a smaller, quieter, more peaceful place, and several were offered for his consideration: Besançon, Cologne, Aachen, Speyer, Trent, and Augsburg.[3] Rejecting all of these for one reason or another, he chose instead the quiet university town of Freiburg im Breisgau. Although Freiburg was perhaps 'a rather poor place' where the inhabitants were 'inclined to be narrow-minded,' it was in other respects an excellent choice. It was 'within easy reach' of Basel and the Froben press;[4] though located in Austrian Hapsburg territory, it was at a safe distance from the court in Vienna; and it was reliably Catholic. On 27 January, Erasmus sent to Ferdinand of Austria a letter that was probably intended to elicit from him an invitation to settle in his domains.[5] A month later, Erasmus addressed to Bernhard von Cles, Ferdinand's trusted adviser, a more specifically worded request in which, for the first time in the surviving correspondence with Ferdinand's court, he mentioned Freiburg by name.[6] Then, in March, in a letter now lost, he appealed once again directly to Ferdinand who, in letters that are also lost, wrote to the town council in Freiburg, commending Erasmus to them, and to Erasmus, providing him with a safe conduct.[7]

Meanwhile, Erasmus had evidently established his own contacts in Freiburg, possibly with the help of his old friend and admirer, Udalricus Zasius, the eminent jurist and member of the university faculty. At all events, even before receiving the letter of commendation from Ferdinand, the town council of Freiburg, acting on its own, had offered Erasmus the use of a house originally built for Emperor Maximilian I.[8] By 2 March, Erasmus had already sent someone to Freiburg to have a look at the house and was pleased with the report that it was 'a quite splendid place.'[9] He planned to depart for Freiburg before Easter (28 March), but on the fifteenth he came down with a severe cold that lasted until the end of the month. At that point, he decided to delay his departure still further, until his friend Hieronymus Froben had returned from the Frankfurt book fair. On about 10 April, Oecolampadius tried in vain to persuade Erasmus to remain in Basel. Then, on

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2 See CWE 14 xix–xx.
3 See Ep 2090 introduction.
4 Ep 2107:19–20
5 Ep 2090
6 Ep 2107
7 For details, see Ep 2090 introduction.
8 Ep 2158:87–8
9 Ep 2112:14–16

the thirteenth, Erasmus set off, going by boat as far as Neuenburg am Rhein and thence overland to Freiburg.[10] The exact date of his arrival in Freiburg is not known, but his first letter from there (Ep 2150) is dated 21 April.

The journey, which Erasmus had dreaded, turned out to be invigorating, and the climate in Freiburg proved to be agreeable. This inspired reports of rejuvenation and good health that are in marked contrast to Erasmus' customary complaints of old age and its infirmities.[11] He had, moreover, good reason to feel welcome in his new home. He had not only his princely residence but also, thanks to Johannes Brisgoicus, a professor of theology at the university, the free use of a private garden.[12] His friend Henricus Glareanus had moved from Basel to Freiburg ahead of him, and Ludwig Baer, another friend who had fled Basel, would settle in Freiburg in the autumn. Also in Freiburg was Ambrosius Pelargus, a Dominican who had fled Basel at the end of January and matriculated in the faculty of theology in Freiburg several weeks later. He now offered Erasmus his friendship and engaged him in a lively but cordial debate over the meaning of difficult passages in the New Testament.[13] With Zasius, as it happened, there was to be little direct personal contact, but that was largely because of Zasius' deafness and declining health, not because of any serious tension between him and Erasmus. For a brief time in the spring of 1529, there were fears that conflict between the Catholic and Protestant cantons in Switzerland would lead to a war that would spill over into the Breisgau (because of Ferdinand of Austria's alliance with the Catholics), thus perhaps forcing Erasmus to move again. But by the end of June, 'the first Kappel war' had come and gone without any actual fighting, and that danger had passed.[14] Freiburg would be Erasmus' home for the next six years.

Despite the trouble and turmoil of moving to Freiburg and getting settled there, Erasmus found time for the scholarly projects, literary endeavours, personal quarrels, and theological controversies that went with being a great scholar and a champion of religious, social, and educational reform with controversial views. His principal achievement in the realm of scholarship was the publication of the new Froben editions of Seneca and St Augustine. Work on both projects had been under way for several years and

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10 Epp 2149 introduction, 2158, 2196
11 See Ep 2151 n1.
12 Ep 2156
13 Epp 2169–70, 2181–2, 2184–6
14 See Epp 2158:89, 2173:31–5, 2180:6–10, 2193:28–9, 2196:163–8, 2199:1–3, 2201:82–3.

had come close to completion in 1528.[15] Long dissatisfied with his first edition of Seneca (1515), the errors in which he blamed on others but for which he accepted responsibility, Erasmus had commenced work on a new edition in 1525. By the autumn of 1528 printing had begun, and by February 1529 copies were ready for the Frankfurt book fair.[16] The dedicatory letter to Piotr Tomicki, bishop of Cracow (Ep 2091), reveals both the strengths and the shortcomings of Erasmus as a Seneca scholar. On the one hand, he could rightly claim to have purged the text of many errors and was able to offer a spirited defence of the moral value to Christians of the works attributed to Seneca. On the other hand, though he agreed with modern scholars that the supposed correspondence between Seneca and St Paul was spurious,[17] he paid no heed to the evidence that there were two Senecas, father and son, and instead persisted in the view, prevalent since late antiquity, that the two were one.

As for St Augustine, Erasmus and his many collaborators had been at work on that ten-volume edition, on and off, since 1518. Juan Luis Vives' edition of *De civitate Dei*, which would eventually be volume 5 of the completed edition, was published separately in 1522.[18] After that, the distraction of other projects slowed progress for a time, but in early 1527 work resumed in earnest and by the autumn of that year the long process of printing had begun. On 8 June 1529 Erasmus could announce that it was finished.[19] The dedicatory letter (Ep 2157), addressed to Alonso de Fonseca, archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain, offers an enthusiastic appreciation of Augustine as a man, theologian, and bishop as well as a vivid account of the difficulties of producing an accurate text from corrupt manuscripts and of getting the results organized and into print.

Meanwhile, Erasmus also produced two additions to the corpus of his devotional and educational works. The first was *De vidua christiana*, written for and dedicated to the widowed queen of Hungary, Mary of Austria (sister of Charles v and Ferdinand), at the request of her court preacher, Johann Henckel.[20] Although generally regarded as an example of Erasmus at less than his best – Erasmus himself did not like it much – the work

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15 See CWE 14 xxi.
16 Ep 2091 introduction
17 On this see also Ep 2092.
18 Epp 1309 introduction, 1341A:1417–43
19 Ep 2157 introduction
20 The dedicatory letter is Ep 2100. For Henckel's request, see Ep 2011:43–53, and cf Epp 2110:3–5, 2118:34–6.

elicited a personal note of thanks from Mary who, after becoming regent of the Netherlands (1531), demonstrated her continuing esteem for Erasmus by inviting him back to his native land on generous terms.[21] The other work was *De pueris instituendis*, 'a Christian humanist reformulation of the classical ideal of a liberal education' that has been judged superior to its classical antecedents as well as to contemporary Renaissance and Reformation tracts on the same subject.[22] Written during Erasmus' sojourn in Italy (c 1509) but not, as originally intended, printed as an appendix to *De copia*, its belated publication was undertaken at the insistence of 'learned friends,' among whom was Konrad Heresbach, the tutor of young William, duke of Cleves, to whom the work was dedicated.[23]

In the category of personal quarrels, the beginning of the year brought a brief spluttering of the bitter but episodic feud with Heinrich Eppendorf that had begun in 1523, when Erasmus accused his one-time friend of having engineered the breach between him and Ulrich von Hutten. After having subsided for a time, the quarrel erupted again in late January 1528.[24] Now, a year later, Erasmus and Eppendorf exchanged letters in which each accused the other of having violated the letter and the spirit of the settlement between them that had been arbitrated by Beatus Rhenanus and Bonifacius Amerbach and signed on 2 February 1528.[25] Erasmus, moreover, sent to Duke George of Saxony an account of the entire controversy with Eppendorf that may have been an early draft of the book against Eppendorf (*Admonitio adversus mendacium*) that would be published in 1530.[26] Another work that can be placed in the category of personal quarrels – because it was part of a literary controversy that had unexpectedly turned personal – was the second edition of the *Ciceronianus*, which was published in March.[27] In the first edition, published in March 1528, Erasmus had unintentionally aroused the fury of French scholars with a clumsy jest comparing the great humanist Guillaume Budé unfavourably as a Ciceronian to the Paris printer Josse Bade. Equally unintentionally, he had offended old friends like Juan Luis Vives by thoughtlessly omitting them from the list of those praised for their accomplishments as Latin

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21 Ep 2820
22 CWE 26 293
23 Ep 2189
24 See Ep 1934 introduction.
25 Epp 2086, 2099
26 See Ep 2124.
27 Ep 2088

stylists.[28] In the second edition Erasmus introduced changes and additions aimed – fruitlessly in the base of Budé and his friends – at repairing the damage and restoring good relations.

Meanwhile, and much more seriously, controversies with his theological adversaries continued to occupy Erasmus. Although there was a temporary lull in his disputes with critics among the partisans of the Reformation, his battles with Catholic conservatives, particularly those in Spain and France, were still in progress. In Spain, the conference of theologians that convened at Valladolid in the summer of 1527 to examine the charges of heresy brought against Erasmus by members of the religious orders had been abruptly terminated before it could come to a decision either to condemn or to exonerate him. In the following autumn, Erasmus, characteristically unwilling to leave well enough alone, wrote his *Apologia adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos*, which was published in March 1528.[29] Although his many Spanish friends and admirers expressed the well-founded fear that such outspoken criticism of his Spanish adversaries would only inflame and strengthen opposition to Erasmianism in their country,[30] Erasmus decided to publish a 'finer and more elegant' second edition to replace the 'badly printed' first one.[31] He seems to have been at work on it as early as February 1529, but it was not completed and printed until the following summer.[32]

In late February, while at work on the new edition of the *Apologia* against the Spanish monks, Erasmus received from friends in France a copy of an attack on him that had been published at Paris in the early weeks of the year. Entitled *Apologia monasticae religionis diluens nugas Erasmi*, it was a defence of the religious orders against Erasmus' harsh criticisms. Although Erasmus did not yet know it, the 'Ludovicus Carvaialus Minorita' named as the author was the Spanish Franciscan Luis de Carvajal of Salamanca, and the book was a somewhat revised version of the original, which had been published at Salamanca in 1528. In his hastily written reply, *Responsio adversus febricitantis cuiusdam libellum*, which was in print before the end of March, he referred to his adversary as 'Pantalabus' (after the parasite in Horace's *Satires*). Not until the *Responsio* had already gone to press did Erasmus receive a copy of the original Salamanca edition of Carvajal's work.[33]

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28 See CWE 14 xii–xiii.
29 Epp 1879, 1967
30 CWE 14 xiv–xvi; Epp 2003, 2004
31 Ep 2133:26–8
32 Ep 2094 introduction
33 Epp 2110 n10, 2126:1–6

Erasmus had in the meantime come to suspect that his adversary, whom he had initially thought was Spanish, was probably the Franciscan from 'Brabant or Gelderland' who had shown up in Basel in the summer of 1527, gained access to Erasmus, and made a pest of himself. The *Apologia*, Erasmus surmised, was the man's revenge for imagined slights.[34] Not until three or four months later did Erasmus learn, via a letter from Alfonso de Valdés, that 'Carvaialus' was indeed a Spaniard and that his 'silly book' was difficult to find in Spain, apparently because the Franciscans themselves had suppressed it, lest Erasmus have cause to reply to it.[35] But since Erasmus had already replied to the Paris edition, the pointless dispute with Carvajal continued into 1530, with Carvajal publishing his *Dulcoratio amarulentiarum Erasmicae responsionis* and Erasmus responding with an open letter to the Franciscans, *Epistola ad gracculos* (Ep 2275), as well as with two letters to Spanish friends (Epp 2299–2300) that were published in the *Epistolae floridae*.[36]

In France, meanwhile, there were two hostile critics to whose works Erasmus felt constrained to reply. One was Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, who since 1525 had been Erasmus' most dangerous Italian critic but who, at some point following the sack of Rome in May 1527, had taken refuge in France and would remain there until his death in 1531. Nobleman, layman, distinguished diplomat, and formidable humanist scholar, Pio had little or nothing in common with Erasmus' detractors among the conservative scholastic theologians apart from the firm belief that Erasmus was guilty of having inspired and defended Luther.[37] By December 1528 Erasmus had learned of Pio's move to France and knew that he was preparing to publish at Paris the lengthy treatise against him that had been circulating in manuscript since May 1526. On 23 December 1528 Erasmus wrote to Pio, arguing that a 'personal colloquy' via private correspondence would be preferable to the public controversy that would follow publication of the book. But Pio's book, the *Responsio accurata et paraenetica*, had already gone to press and was published in the first week of January 1529. Erasmus' *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* appeared in March, and the public controversy thus inaugurated continued until 1532.[38]

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34 Ep 2126:63–111
35 Ep 2198:4–34
36 See Ep 2110 n10.
37 On the development of the controversy between Pio and Erasmus, see CWE 14 xvii–xviii.
38 Epp 2080, 2118:19–34

The other antagonist in France was Noël Béda, the arch-conservative syndic of the faculty of theology at the University of Paris, who for many years had sought to prove that Erasmus was a secret Lutheran. Though direct correspondence between Béda and Erasmus had long since ceased, Béda's campaign against Erasmus continued unabated.[39] His *Apologia adversus clandestinos Lutheranos*, which Erasmus thought 'sillier and crazier' than the *Apologia* against Erasmus and Lefèvre of 1526,[40] was published at Paris on 1 February 1529. Erasmus' *Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas* appeared at Basel in March.[41] After that there was silence until 1531, when Béda published a volume containing the condemnation of the *Colloquies* and other works that the faculty had issued on 16 December 1527. Erasmus' response, the *Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas* (1532) would be his final word to Béda and the Paris faculty of theology.

It was against the background of this long-standing feud with the Paris theologians that Erasmus received the news that his young friend and kindred spirit Louis de Berquin had been executed at Paris on 17 April 1529, immediately following his third trial on charges of heresy.[42] Berquin had been a troublesome friend. The publication in 1525 of his translations into French of several works of Erasmus, with interpolations from the works of Luther and other heretical authors, had not only strengthened the faculty's claim that Berquin was an advocate of Lutheran impiety but also fanned their ill will towards Erasmus on the same grounds. Berquin had, moreover, foolishly ignored Erasmus' urgent pleas that he not risk his life by engaging in reckless defiance of the powerful and unscrupulous defenders of tradition with which Paris was so abundantly supplied. All the same, Erasmus remained convinced that Berquin had been a good man, innocent of either heresy or impiety. Moved by eyewitness accounts of Berquin's courage and steadfastness in the face of death, Erasmus committed his feelings to paper in the form of a letter to his young friend Karel Uutenhove that was soon published in the *Opus epistolarum*.[43]

At about the same time that he was absorbing the news of the death of Berquin, Erasmus was unexpectedly reminded of his despised but long-silent antagonist Diego López Zúñiga. Zúñiga's defence of the Vulgate against Erasmus' 'blasphemous and impious' criticisms had ignited a vitriolic contro-

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39 For the course of their controversy to the end of 1528, see CWE 14 xvi.
40 See Ep 2110:23–4.
41 Ep 2110 n8
42 For Berquin's three trials for heresy, see CWE 14 xvii.
43 Ep 2188

versy that started in 1520 and fizzled out in 1524.[44] Now, five years later, sorting through his papers in the wake of his move to Freiburg, Erasmus came across a copy of the *Assertio ecclesiasticae translationis Novi Testamenti* – Zúñiga's rebuttal of Erasmus' charge that the Latin of the Vulgate was riddled with solecisms – which had been published at Rome in 1524. At the time, Erasmus had deemed the work unworthy of a response,[45] but now he dashed off a reply in the form of a long letter to Hubertus Barlandus (Ep 2172). Erasmus published the letter with his correspondence in the *Opus epistolarum*. Since then, however, the editors of all editions of Erasmus' *opera*, including CWE, have placed the work among the apologetic writings under the title *Epistola apologetica adversus Stunicam*.[46] Here we have followed Allen's example by including only the opening and closing passages of the letter.[47]

The final letter in this volume, Ep 2203, is the preface, addressed 'to the reader,' of the *Opus epistolarum*, which was in press by May 1529 and in circulation by September. Compiled at the insistent urging of friends and with the encouragement of Hieronymus Froben, who claimed that it would be a good seller, the *Opus epistolarum* is the largest collection of Erasmus' correspondence published during his lifetime. Erasmus included in it all the letters from earlier editions of the correspondence and added over four hundred more. Having no appreciation of the importance of his letters to critical scholarship, and disliking the drudgery of working on them, Erasmus dismissed the suggestion of friends that the letters be arranged in chronological order, and he supplied more than half of them with demonstrably false dates.[48] In the case of a great many of the letters, the *Opus epistolarum* text is the only one that survives. Getting the letters into chronological order and supplying them with at least approximately accurate dates was one of P.S. Allen's greatest achievements as editor.

Of the 123 letters in this volume, 81 were written by Erasmus and 42 were addressed to him. These surviving letters include four dozen references to letters that are no longer extant. Since a few of these references are to an unspecified number of letters, no exact total of letters known to have been written during the period covered by this volume can be determined, but 200 would be a reasonable estimate. Of the surviving letters,

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44 Ep 1341A:868–927
45 Ep 1466:38–53
46 See Ep 2172 introduction.
47 A translation of the full text will be published in CWE 74.
48 See Ep 2203 introduction.

68 were published by Erasmus himself. Of these, 54 appeared in the *Opus epistolarum* of 1529 and 1 in the *Epistolae floridae* of 1531. Another 12 were dedicatory prefaces to works or editions by Erasmus, and 1 was an addendum to a republished work.[49] The remaining 55 letters were published by a variety of scholars in the period from Erasmus' death to 2009. Eleven of them were first published by Allen. To allow the reader to discover the sequence in which the letters became known, the introduction to each letter cites the place where it was first published and identifies the manuscript source if one exists.

Except for Ep 2088, which was translated by Betty I. Knott for inclusion in CWE 28, the letters in this volume were translated by Alexander Dalzell. Allen's text and his numbering of the letters have been followed. A recently discovered letter of Willibald Pirckheimer that Allen did not know about appears here as Ep 2178A.

All of Erasmus' correspondents and all of the contemporaries of Erasmus who are mentioned in the letters are referred to by the version of their name that is used in CEBR. Wherever biographical information is supplied in the notes without the citation of a source, the reader is tacitly referred to the appropriate article in CEBR and to the literature there cited. The index to this volume contains references to the persons, places, and works mentioned in the volume, following the plan for the correspondence series in CWE. When that series of volumes is completed, the reader will also be supplied with an index of topics, as well as of classical, scriptural, and patristic references.

As with all the other volumes in this series, P.S. Allen's exemplary Latin edition of Erasmus' correspondence was the basis for the translation and the annotation of the text. In those cases where Allen's work as annotator needed to be corrected, updated, or expanded, I was able to rely on the advice and assistance of distinguished colleagues here in Toronto and elsewhere. The great majority of the classical and patristic references that were not identified by Allen were supplied by the translator, Alexander Dalzell. James Farge gave me the benefit of his detailed knowledge of the operations of the Paris faculty of theology and the Parlement of Paris. Robert Sider, Erika Rummel, Milton Kooistra, and Piotr Wróbel generously

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49 Ep 2203, the preface to the *Opus epistolarum*, is here counted among the letters published in that volume rather than among the other prefatory letters. So, too, is Ep 2172, which consists of the first and last paragraphs of the letter to Hubertus Barlandus that was first published in the *Opus epistolarum* but subsequently became the *Epistola apologetica adversus Stunicam.*

responded to my requests for information on difficult matters of language, classical and biblical scholarship, history, or bibliography. Charles Fantazzi and John O'Malley read the entire manuscript and offered most helpful suggestions for changes and improvements. John Munro not only supplied all the money notes but also provided valuable information about the terminology of Erasmus' financial transactions. Last, but far from least, Mary Baldwin once again earned the gratitude of all concerned with the peerless copyediting that contributes so much to the clarity and accuracy of both the translation and the notes. The book was typeset by Lynn Browne and Philippa Matheson.

Of the libraries used in the preparation of this volume, two were of special importance: that of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies at Victoria College in the University of Toronto, and that of the Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies on the campus of St Michael's College in the University of Toronto. To Kimberly Yates, Assistant to the Director of the Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies (2002–8), to her successor Stephanie Treloar (2008–11), and to William Edwards, reference librarian at the Pontifical Institute, I am indebted for the special treatment that they graciously provide to those engaged in the *bona causa* of annotating Erasmus. Mr. Edwards' astonishing knack for finding useful information via computer searches deserves special mention.

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THE CORRESPONDENCE OF ERASMUS

LETTERS 2082 TO 2203

2082 / From Levinus Ammonius St Maartensbos, 6 January 1529

This letter, which is Ammonius' response to Ep 2062, was first published by Allen from the autograph in the Bibiliothèque municipale at Besançon (MS 599 page 202). The letter was sent to Erasmus Schets to be forwarded (Ep 2197:28–32), but it was delayed so long in transit that Erasmus had no chance to reply before Ammonius wrote to him again (Ep 2197).

On Ammonius (1488–1557), a Carthusian in the monastery of St Maartensbos near Brussels, see Epp 1463, 2016. Like his other surviving letters to Erasmus (Epp 1463, 2016, 2197, 2817), this one is a remarkable literary performance, written in splendidly fluent Latin, with occasional shifts into excellent Greek, and replete with echoes of classical authors.

LEVINUS AMMONIUS TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM,
WITHOUT QUESTION THE GREATEST OF THEOLOGIANS,
SINCEREST GREETINGS

Dear Erasmus, even with the best will in the world I could not describe the delight with which I received your letter; indeed, as the saying goes, I embraced it with arms wide open.[1] To think that you counted the friendship of this poor creature so highly that you replied to my letter in your own learned hand! Even when I held the letter between my fingers I could hardly persuade myself that it came from you – not until I had devoured it completely. With what a ready and voracious appetite I did so is something I could not put down on paper. You would have done me honour enough if you had communicated your feelings towards me through a secretary or in some other way, for all I wanted was to be assured that you did not resent my friendly intervention. But in your generosity such a response seemed to you insufficient unless confirmed by more tangible evidence. How, then, am I to regard this autograph letter? Please, Erasmus, do not imagine that I underestimate this honour. If the greatest scholars, if our foremost leaders and mighty prelates value the letters of Erasmus so highly (and properly so), if they like to fold them in their bosom to impress their friends, if, to prevent their being stolen, they guard them religiously as a precious treasure, what do you think a nobody[2] like me should do, who has no learning or influence or rank to commend him?

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2082

1 *Adagia* II ix 54

2 Literally 'a person on the lowest bench'; see *Adagia* III vii 80.

How I wish I could have demonstrated to you in person the full measure of my delight, or rather, my excitement.[3] Because of my affection for you, tears came to my eyes when I thought I could practically feel your presence in the very characters on the page. How often I reread the letter! How often, when I reached the end, I went back to the beginning![4] How often, after putting it away, I took it up again, hardly believing I had read it with sufficient care! And I could never read it often enough! Moreover, the timing of its arrival increased my delight, since I received it almost before I heard that my own letter had reached you. My friend Omaar, or, as I should now call him, 'our friend Omaar,'[5] was so careful and prompt and solicitous about sending it on to you that he did not write to tell me he had sent it until he had already received your reply, hoping, I suppose, by his promptness to put his kind offices in the best light, and knowing that 'a good turn done quickly is sweeter still.'[6] All the same, he held on to your letter for several days until he could find a reliable person to deliver it to me (for this was what you had requested).

If I were now simply to express my gratitude, this would seem a much too feeble expression of my feelings towards you, Erasmus, and I should be embarrassed to repay your great kindness with a few cheap words. I prefer, if you can find any use for me, to offer myself entirely to you and dedicate myself to your service; although the truth forces me to admit that I am too deeply indebted to you ever to discharge my debt, even if I held an auction and sold myself and all I possess piece by piece (assuming, that is, that I have something that can properly be called my own), for what could such a sale bring in that would be adequate compensation for your kindness? It is to you, second only to Christ, that I owe whatever wisdom I possess, and it is because of you that I broke loose from the shabby notions I once professed; and although I never totally immersed myself in them (being

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3 Ammonius is thinking of Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 4.13, where a distinction is drawn between 'delight' (*gaudium*) and 'excitement' (*laetitia*). Cicero defines *gaudium* as arising from 'rational satisfaction' and *laetitia* as a sort of transport or irrational excitement. The distinction is not generally maintained in Latin and cannot easily be brought out in English.

4 Literally 'how often I returned from the chalk line to the head' (*a calce ad caput*), a proverbial expression derived from the race course; see *Adagia* III v 35.

5 Omaar van Edingen; see Epp 2060, 2062 introductions.

6 Ammonius cites in Greek from the *Anthologia Palatina* 10.30; see *Adagia* I viii 91.

held in check by an independent mind), yet since I grew up among them, I could not entirely escape their influence. Finally, since whatever learning I possess I owe entirely to you, you have a right to make any demands on me you wish, as you would on a pupil. If you decide to do so, you will discover how different I am from that unpleasant fellow you described in your letter,[7] whose damnable ingratitude makes him detested alike by gods and men,[8] and who deserves to be punished with all the severity customary among the Persians.[9] But since I can never balance my account with you, I am firmly resolved to show my gratitude by acknowledging my debt and acting in no ungenerous manner, always looking for a way to repay your kindness, if ever an opportunity arises. And yet I pray that Christ our Lord will make all your affairs and all your plans turn out as you would wish and that you will sail on before so fair a wind[10] that you will have no need of your humble servant's help.

In addition to your letter I received another, and by no means insignificant, kindness from you; for you were good enough to write to our friend Omaar, again in your own hand, and you did this for my sake. He thanked me in the most appreciative terms, acknowledging that he owed it all to me. But listen to his own words: 'I am sending you,' he says, 'at your request, a copy of the letter that Erasmus sent me out of respect for you.[11] I consider myself very lucky to have looked with these eyes upon Erasmus' face, luckier still to have in my possession a letter addressed to me in his own hand, and luckiest of all that so great a man was not too proud to be counted among my friends. The last two of these blessings I owe to you, dear Ammonius. I wish I were able not just to acknowledge his kindness, but to return it.' These are his words. Could you imagine anything more affectionate than that? He really deserves your friendship, Erasmus, for he is more warmhearted than I can say and generous to all who are devoted to good literature and true piety.

When I reflect on the three kinds of happiness in which Omaar takes such pride, I realize that, with respect to the last two, my position is quite

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7 For 'unpleasant,' Ammonius writes *inamoenus*, a word used more commonly of things than of people. But he is punning on the name Gervasius Amoenus, who is his target here; cf Ep 2062:32–8, and see lines 241–6 below. In Latin *amoenus* means 'lovely.'

8 Cf Cicero *Philippics* 8.10.

9 The severity of Persian punishments was proverbial; see eg Xenophon *Anabasis* 1.9.13.

10 *Adagia* II v 16

11 Ep 2060. See also Ep 2062 introduction.

comparable to his, and that I give place to him only on the first. For after your friendly reply I cannot have the slightest doubt of your affection, nor can I persuade myself that a man of your integrity did not mean it when you wrote that you were 'truly mine.' So far I am on a level with my dear friend. But he surpasses me in having seen Erasmus face to face, and I have never looked upon him with my own eyes. But I see no reason to torment myself on this account, since perhaps I know Erasmus just as well from his writings, in which all his greatness is marvellously portrayed. With the help of these I can conjure up Erasmus in my mind whenever I please and hold sweet converse with this exceptional man. This gives me such pleasure that hardly a day passes without my visiting Erasmus here and paying my humble respects.

Indeed, I think it is not altogether a misfortune that I have never seen you. It has at least this advantage, if nothing else, that no one can suspect that there is anything false in the friendship that exists between us, since it was not born of familiar intimacy or personal favours but is the product of a discriminating judgment and a high regard for your qualities. Love that precedes judgment is portrayed by the poets as completely blind,[12] and so it is. But when judgment precedes admiration and then love follows as a result of admiration, that love cannot be anything but genuine. So it is not such a great matter to know someone by appearance, nor should this be regarded as making for happiness. Christ himself, who said to his disciples, 'Blessed are the eyes that see the things that you see,'[13] also said of some, 'They have both seen and hated,'[14] a judgment that you too might rightly express about several people. In my opinion, if you have carefully examined the mind of someone whom you would wish to have as a friend and found it agrees in everything with your own, that is the important thing, for nothing inspires affection so readily as harmony of minds. Who would want to clash with a man who he knows is sincerely advancing the work of Christ? Only someone utterly depraved and hostile to the Holy Spirit. These reflections are not intended, however, to detract in any way from the happiness of my

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12 Although ancient writers often refer to the blindness of all passions, including love (eg Catullus 67.25), Cupid was not represented as blind. The idea that love, represented by Cupid, is blind (or blindfolded) entered European thought and iconography in the thirteenth century. See Erwin Panofsky *Studies in Iconology: Humanistic Themes in the Art of the Renaissance* (Oxford, 1939; repr New York 1962 and 1972), chapter 4, 'Blind Cupid.'

13 Luke 10:23

14 John 15:24

friend Omaar, whose felicity I want to be complete. I know that he himself thinks as I do, that his happiness does not consist in having seen Erasmus in the flesh with his own eyes (although this too is not something to reject, when it happens between friends), but rather because he has been able to know the whole mind of Erasmus from his noble works. Whenever he finds some relief from public business, he turns to these writings with all the more enthusiasm because they help to form the mind. And they do this very effectively, not just because they are the work of Erasmus, although this too is no small matter, but because they accord beautifully with the pure teachings of Christ.

If I insisted a little too strongly in my letter that you should not take offence, I did so, Erasmus, not because I was ignorant of your character or feared that my trifling comments would upset you (always assuming they were presented to you at an appropriate moment); it was rather that I preferred to err on the side of caution: I thought it better to try to avert any resentment on your part than risk even the smallest possibility of incurring it; for as I was writing, I thought of the many critics who seek to win fame for themselves and bring infamy on you by disparaging your beautiful and valuable writings. It seemed to me that unless I made every effort to avoid it, the same suspicion could all too easily fall on me, since critics of this sort generally belong to the monastic orders. Besides, I was aware of Pliny's view that he could only be sure that a friend really liked his book if there was something in it that he disliked,[15] and I easily convinced myself that you were not of a different opinion. I criticized only passages that troubled me, and my comments were not made on my own account but from the perspective of those who as a rule have raised the greatest fuss over trifles, matters of no more importance than goats' wool[16] – for among so many brilliant passages, these faults could have passed unnoticed, like boils on a beautiful body, which the world does not see.[17] Even so, I admit I could not send off my criticisms without misgiving; for I was afraid you would compare me, not to bees that select the most beautiful flowers in the meadow, but to flies that settle on a festering sore; and I had all the more reason to worry because I could not know what frame of mind you would be in, whether depressed or happy, when they were presented to you. I thought of

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15 Pliny *Epistles* 3.13.5. Cf Ep 182:57–9.

16 A proverbial expression for something of little value; see *Adagia* I iii 53.

17 The idea that small blemishes on a beautiful body do not spoil the general effect is common in ancient writers: see eg Cicero *De natura deorum* 1.79; Horace *Satires* 1.6.67.

the many things that could happen, and especially that it is a rare individual, one in countless thousands, who keeps an even countenance. So there is nothing surprising in the fact that I feared the very thing I desperately wanted to avoid, that you would not understand my intentions and would class me with your detractors, when in fact I have always been your most enthusiastic admirer and have won friends for you wherever I could.

Need I mention, Erasmus, the many times I defended you and your works against slanderous critics and boldly faced the enemy with spear and shield,[18] and how I brought them round and sent them away with a kindlier opinion of you? Need I mention the many detractors who attacked you without reason, influenced solely by rash and groundless gossip, and how, after they had seen and read your own apologetic writings, I brought them to confess their error? Believe me, I yield to none of your friends in loyalty and honesty. Was it not proper, then, for me to address a man like you, a man uniquely dear to me, as modestly as possible, so that you would have no cause to take offence? Believe me, I speak from the heart[19] when I say that I could not find words adequate to express what I feel for you; what emerges has always been less than I intended. But tell me, good Erasmus, could anyone else have convinced you of this if I myself had not taken a little extra trouble to win your good will, especially since I approached you with no previous commendation? For if it had turned out, as might well have happened with a stranger, that you misconstrued my letter, which was written with the best of intentions, and concluded that I acted with some perverse desire to insult you, and if you had shown your chagrin in a letter, I would, to tell you the truth, have been badly hurt, but you would not have altered my feelings, so deep is the affection I feel for you. I did not adopt this attitude lightly, nor did it spring from some whim, or the capricious tattle of the mob, or from some other baseless fancy that I could easily discard; rather my affection for you is unwavering, based, as it is, on solid judgment after a thorough examination of your magnificent writings; it is the result of a long-standing conviction, and has now spread through every fibre of my being. But, I am happy to say, my mind is now at ease, since you proved by your friendly letter that the risk I took in being so frank has turned out happily for me. Nothing in my life could have given me more pleasure than your letter.

Moreover, you went so far as to beg me not to hesitate to send you any further criticisms I might have along the same lines, although you should

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18 *Adagia* II viii 66
19 *Adagia* I x 46

have ordered me to do so, for this is a right I willingly concede to you. In so doing, Erasmus, you acted with great courtesy and modesty, quite at odds with the general, but mistaken, presumption that certain people have about your character. They do not hesitate to say (but they are, for the most part, Lutheran zealots) that no one can offer you the slightest criticism without your immediately turning on him, and that because of your *amour propre* and stubbornness nothing can make you budge from your own position. I have frequently skirmished with people like that or even engaged in angry confrontations. As a result I have felt the need to search out passages from all of your books, to store them in my mind and have them at my fingertips so as to refute their impudent falsehoods;[20] these are the passages in which you ask the honest reader, in unambiguous language, for friendly criticism if he finds a place where you have gone astray (for to err is only human);[21] you add this rider, however, that you will feel obliged to him only if he responds with rational argument, not rancorous abuse. Otherwise, most people would agree, such a critic would be a mischief-maker and not a friend, however much he assumed the mask of friendship. It is only proper, in correcting someone else, to act courteously and to remember that you too are human and can be mistaken. If you press your criticisms too bluntly, as Horace says, 'when their chance comes, they will scrutinize your faults in return.'[22] Those who are hard on others are less likely to be forgiven when they go astray themselves.

The critics who pore over your works in search of errors are, in my opinion, guilty on two counts of acting in an uncivilized manner: first, they are eager to injure you, and secondly, they do not spare themselves. They injure you because they do everything in their power to diminish the praise that is your proper due – or rather, they want to appropriate it for themselves, which is a kind of sacrilege; and they harm themselves because they waste a great deal of time – and time is the most precious thing we have – and all they get from their contemporaries or will get from future generations is bitter hatred. If they are gripped by such an uncontrollable passion to parade their learning that they would rather win a name by evil means than remain obscure, why don't they rely on their own prowess?[23] By doing

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20 For 'at my fingertips' the text reads 'as ready cash'; see *Adagia* IV iii 82.

21 On Erasmus' readiness to accept friendly criticism of his work, see Epp 180:14–20, 182:62–70, 347:385–91, 844:19–21 and 298–9, 1076:1–9, 1225:59–62 and 72–5, 1384:52–4, 1418:43–5. But cf Ep 899:3–6.

22 *Satires* 1.3.27–8

23 Literally 'on their own Mars'; see *Adagia* I vi 19.

something original they would show us what their industry can achieve, while leaving the work of others alone. But if they must assume the role of critic, let them do so courteously and without acrimony, as a decent person should, and humbly and without any hint of pride, as befits a Christian. In this way the author keeps his due praise untarnished while the reader has the benefit to which he is entitled. At the same time they should remember that it is only natural that an author, after treating many passages with a nice judgment and an alert mind, should at some point nod off, for he is only human. If critics act like this, they will show respect for the work of others and win praise for themselves by their fairness.

What inspired these people to do what they are doing – to stand before a credulous rabble and deliver senseless tirades from the pulpit (from which we expect to hear the gospel preached), making wild attacks[24] on the reputation of an innocent neighbour and causing riot and sedition? And while they behave in this un-Christian manner, they pride themselves on carrying out the duties of a Christian soul. I believe that the city magistrates and those with authority over the churches would do well to give these worthless creatures a sound thrashing and send them to dig in the mines for a while, until they learn from their sufferings to reflect on the true meaning of Christian peace and concord. Long experience has taught me that the people who are most likely to roar with the full power of their lungs and start a riot and condemn others get their self-assurance from their bellies, men bloated with food and drink, not just fools, but madmen filled with spite, utterly useless to everyone, mere creatures of the belly, a useless burden on the earth.[25] Such a one, I believe, is that Gervasius from Normandy, ironically named 'Amoenus,'[26] who deserves to be denounced by every decent man, for he repaid your kindness with signal ingratitude. Not content with hating such a generous protector, mentor, and patron, he invented lies about you, making Alfenus madder than he was, though he was mad enough on his own. You know whom I mean by 'Alfenus' (I take my cue, as you can see, from Horace).[27] I am sure you have no great reason to fear anything

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24 The Latin for 'wild attacks' is *debacchantes*, echoing Erasmus' polemic against Pierre Cousturier, *Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris* (Ep 1591). Cousturier (Epp 1571 n10, 1943 n7), whose name in Latin was Sutor, was the chief ally of Noël Béda (see n56 below) in the latter's campaign to prove that Erasmus was a secret ally of Luther. Erasmus regarded Cousturier as incompetent as well as malevolent.

25 'Useless burden on the earth' cited in Greek from Homer *Iliad* 18.104

26 See n7 above.

27 *Satires* 1.3.130–2. Horace describes Alfenus as a 'barber' (*tonsor*), but some

from that quarter, although it is annoying to be the target of such poisonous abuse.

But surely no one will stoop to read that fantastic nonsense. I imagine the printer, whoever he was, did himself no good and will not waste his time and money[28] on a second occasion. In future he will not be willing to take a risk on a Carian like this fellow,[29] when he sees the stock remaining in his shop with no one inquiring after it and in the end has to force it on the hucksters as a wrapping for incense or mackerel,[30] to say nothing of more disgusting possibilities.[31] I assure you, Erasmus, on my honour, that among all those persons who are ready to buy any new book that catches their fancy – and I know many such – I am aware of no one who bought the work of this scurrilous wretch. On the other hand, I could name some who came upon a copy in a bookshop in Antwerp and, seeing the name of the author, flung it away immediately with curses and imprecations; far from being willing to waste a penny[32] on buying it, they refused even to look at it. Everyone is convinced that the author is simply conjuring up empty visions, like the fantasies of a sick man, where neither head nor tail belong to a single whole,[33] and that he has nothing to teach us that is worth knowing. I am aware that he himself has thrust his brainchildren on some men of my order (for, like a monkey, he dotes on his offspring despite their awful ugliness). He offers them as a gift although no one has requested them. He is under the impression, I suppose, that what he is offering is a rare and splendid prize. What a fool the man is to believe that! Does he want to know how the gifts were received? Well, I'll tell him: they were received with sardonic laughter,[34] like the gifts offered by the Calabrian host,[35] a

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manuscripts of the *Satires* read *sutor* 'cobbler' instead of *tonsor*, and that is the reading Ammonius has in mind. The reference is to Cousturier; see n24 above.

28 Literally 'oil and expenses,' with 'oil' meaning 'time and effort.' See *Adagia* I iv 62, and cf Epp 2141:24, 2165:4–5.

29 Ie take a risk on a worthless person; see *Adagia* I vi 14.

30 It is a favourite jibe of Roman writers that poor poems will end up as wrapping for incense (Horace *Epistles* 2.1.269–70; Persius 1.43) or mackerel (Catullus 95.8; Martial 4.86.8; Persius 1.43).

31 Judging by the joke at the end of this paragraph, it seems that Ammonius means use as toilet paper, though at that time the use of expensive paper for so lowly a purpose would have been highly unusual.

32 *Adagia* I viii 9

33 See Horace *Ars poetica* 7–9.

34 On 'sardonic laughter' see *Adagia* III v 1.

35 The Calabrian host pressed on his guests gifts that no one wanted. See Horace *Epistles* 1.7.14–19.

veritable rotten onion,[36] or something more worthless still. Do you think anyone would knowingly pick either of them up with his hands? In the end (believe it or not) I actually read these fine volumes, which had been sent to me by someone who was landed with this most unwelcome gift. I did not read them through (for who could manage that?), but what I read caused me such disgust that my stomach turned at the very sight of them and nearly caused me to vomit. Do you want to know where they ended up? Saving your ears, Erasmus, I prefer not to say!

Clearly, this man does not deserve the honour of three words from you. I wonder what he hopes to accomplish by such fierce and terrible insults – and the brute always has a store of these at hand ready for use. Anyone with a little common sense could see at once that what he is doing is either mad or, worse still, blasphemous. He thinks that Mary should be exalted as the mother of Christ, who is both God and man, or rather should be invoked regularly by the preacher in preference to the Holy Spirit; and again he tells us that her goodness and devotion earned her the honour of being chosen for her high office and made her worthy to become the Virgin Mother of God.[37] I do not know how others react to these blasphemies, but I was horrified when I read them. I cannot think what has happened to our Christian bishops, why they have not been roused to do their godly duty and make the fellow eat his blasphemous words, or condemn him to everlasting silence, or (to be kinder to him) send him back to the cobbler's shop to stitch Scythian shoes.[38] I think, however, that if beneath that hard exterior of his he is still capable of feeling shame, he will immediately be shamed into silence if he deigns to read that note of yours on the passage in St Luke 'he has regarded the lowly estate of his handmaiden,'[39] and again in John, 'if I will that he tarry till I

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36 'A rotten onion' was proverbial for something completely useless; see *Adagia* III ii 94.

37 Cf Ep 2188:106–8.

38 This sentence, with its echoes of the proverb 'Let the cobbler stick to his last' (*Adagia* I vi 16), has a good deal of gleeful word play in it. There is, first of all, the usual pun on Cousturier's name, which in Latin is Sutor ('cobbler'; cf n27 above). There is also the alliteration between the Greek word for 'Scythian' (*skuthika*) and that for 'cobbler's shop' (*skutice*), which was perhaps intended to be amusing in itself but may also have been intended to bring to mind the proverbial savagery of the Scythians (*Adagia* IV ix 85).

39 In his annotation on Luke 1:48 (LB VI 225F–227C) Erasmus argues that the meaning is not, as 'a certain Paris theologian' thinks, that God honoured Mary because of her humility, but that he did not turn away from her because of her lowly estate.

come.'[40] In the latter passage you came close to mentioning his name, but I think you were right not to do so, for he has no claim to appear in such an erudite and immortal work, not even in a defamatory context. You will find a better place for that later. But I fear the fellow will take it badly that right at the end of this note you summed up the whole truth in a word or two, for he shuns the truth more than dog or snake.[41] But let him take it however he wishes – I care nothing for the judgment of a presumptuous fellow like this, who, without a blush,[42] dared to deny that anyone in this order ever thought that the beginning and end[43] of piety lay in invented rituals.[44] I am acquainted with several men cut from the same cloth[45] who in years past took such ideas for granted but have gradually begun to think better of it now that the world is coming to its senses and today are deeply ashamed of their old prejudices. Would that he were justified in making that denial so vigorously! If only Christ would bestow on all men the liberty of the spirit, so that no one would have fear where there is no fear![46] But enough of that. To write at length about these people has its dangers: a spy[47] might appear from anywhere and listen in.

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40 In his annotation on John 21:22 (LB VI 419B–421C) Erasmus defends the reading *si velim* 'if I will' against the Vulgate's *sic velim* 'so I should wish,' which was supported by 'a certain Carthusian theologian.' Erasmus' note ends with a vigorous attack on stubborn conservatism in the textual criticism of the Bible.

41 Horace *Epistles* 1.17.30; *Adagia* II ix 63

42 *Adagia* I viii 47

43 Literally 'stem and stern'; see *Adagia* I i 8.

44 This sentence, Greek in the original, is an unusually difficult one. The word here translated as 'invented rituals' is ἐθελοθρησκεία, which is taken from Col 2:23, where Paul is arguing against excessive religious practices. The literal meaning is 'willed worship' (cf 'self-imposed worship' in NIV, 'self-imposed religion' in NKJV). In his annotation of the passage (LB VI 893A), Erasmus glossed the word as *superstitio*, a word that he often used for a pedantic adherence to rules or 'Jewish legalism.' Ammonius is probably referring to rites of the church that did not have scriptural authority but that Erasmus' conservative critics insisted on upholding.

45 Literally 'made of the same flour'; see *Adagia* III v 44.

46 Ps 53:5 (52:6 Vulgate)

47 Literally 'a Corycaean.' 'Corycaean' became synonymous with 'spy' because the people who lived near Mount Corycus in Pamphylia were said to be adept at discovering through eavesdropping what cargo was on ships in port, information they then communicated to pirates with whom they were in league. See Cicero *Ad Atticum* 10.18.1, and cf *Adagia* I ii 44: *Corycaeus auscultavit* 'A Corycaean was listening.'

The news about Germain de Brie was very welcome. I was glad to hear that, having completed his version of *Babylas*, he is now embarking on a translation of the remaining *Psegmata* of Chrysostom.[48] I only wish he had the time to undertake all the rest, or at least to correct those works that have not been accurately translated or touch them up and refashion them[49] in that distinctly Gallic style of his. There is no doubt he would produce something that would be warmly welcomed by all who care for Christian piety. Anyone who has the leisure to compare the splendid Greek of Chrysostom's *On the Priesthood* with the sorry Latin version will see at once how miserably the translation treats that most saintly writer, who has such a truly golden voice.[50] Apart from dozens of mistranslations there are places where the sense is exactly opposite to that of the original. As for the attack that Brie launched against Oecolampadius with all sails flying,[51] while in general this is well deserved, I doubt if it will go down with all good men as well as it has with certain theologians.[52] I would have preferred that the debate had been conducted with true Christian gentleness through an exchange of letters, so that emotions would not get out of hand. My hope would be that Oecolampadius, who, in my opinion, is not generously endowed with good sense, might abandon his silly and mistaken notions about true doctrine and return to the faith and to a more sober frame of mind, for his defection saddens me greatly.

Anyone who disagrees with this verdict should read critically the comment Oecolampadius wrote on a verse in the first chapter of Isaiah, or 'Iesaia,' as he has it (and for the moment I say nothing about other passages):

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48 *Psegmata* 'shavings' is an allusion to the collection of short pieces by Chrysostom translated into Latin by Johannes Oecolampadius and published under the title *Divi Ioannis Chrysostomi Psegmata quaedam* (Basel: Cratander 1523). Among the pieces included was Chrysostom's *De sancto Babyla*. After publishing his own translation of the work in 1528 (Paris: Simon de Colines), Brie, whose low opinion of Oecolampadius as a translator was shared by Ammonius, announced that he was going make his own translation of the rest of the short works included in Oecolampadius' volume. See Ep 2062:26–9 and see also Epp 2016:95–102, 2052 n2.

49 Ammonius is here making witty use of a phrase from Plautus' *Amphitryon* 317, where a bully is threatening to 'touch up and refashion' his opponent's face.

50 Chrysostom's admirers were fond of pointing out that his name means 'golden-voiced.'

51 *Adagia* IV vi 1

52 On Brie's published attack on Oecolampadius, see Ep 2052 n2.

'If you be willing and will hearken to me etc.' On this verse, aided no doubt by the Muses, he composed a marvellous note on the freedom of the will, and this highly spiritual man, breathed on by the Spirit (or should I say out of breath),[53] dreamed up some nonsense about 'spiritual spirits.'[54] I believe, Erasmus, that in your battle with that other antagonist over the freedom of the will,[55] you made such a convincing case that there is no need for the silly and muddled note that Oecolampadius added to this passage; and although a true Christian spirit, which prays even for its enemies, teaches us to act differently, I shall be interested to observe the new comedy that will be played out among these men (or will it turn out to be, as I rather expect, a tragicomedy?). For I think that many of this man's undiscriminating admirers, who think more highly of him than he deserves, will learn a useful lesson when they recognize how miserably he has handled Chrysostom, his chosen author for translation into Latin. I believe that our friend Brie did not start this controversy without cause and that it must be skilfully fought out to the end.

I come now to Béda[56] and those pseudomonks in Spain.[57] I never cease to wonder at the extraordinary obstinacy which has taken such a firm hold of their minds that, even when proven wrong by clear arguments, they refuse to abandon the fight but attack more fiercely or rather more madly than before. Do they really suspect you of being a secret supporter of Luther?

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53 The translation is an attempt to bring out a rather strained pun: Oecolampadius is both *spiritualis* 'spiritual' and *spirituosus*, a nonexistent word that Allen suggests should be read as *spiritosus* 'breathless'; see Allen IV xxix on Ep 957:16. One is tempted to conclude that Ammonius intends 'out of breath' to be understood as 'without the breath of the Spirit.'

54 Oecolampadius *In Iesaiam prophetam Hypomnemata* (Basel: Cratander 1525) book 1 17 verso (on Isa 1:19): 'In God we live and move, and not just we men, but all spiritual spirits also.'

55 Erasmus' *De libero arbitrio* (1524) elicited from Luther the *De servo arbitrio* (1525), to which Erasmus responded with *Hyperaspistes 1* and 2 (1526, 1527). See CWE 76–7.

56 Noël Béda (Epp 1571, 1943 n6), the arch-conservative syndic of the faculty of theology at Paris, was Erasmus' most implacable critic in France. From 1519 he waged a relentless campaign to prove that Erasmus and other humanist scholars were secret supporters of Luther. The long and increasingly bitter correspondence between Béda and Erasmus ended in 1527, but their controversy continued all through 1528 (see CWE 14 xvi) and was still alive; see Ep 2110:23–4.

57 See Ep 2094 introduction.

Surely you have made it abundantly clear to the whole world how false that charge is. But if they suspect something else, why don't they stop the bickering and conduct themselves in a slightly more civilized manner? What have they gained from all this invective and bitterness except to make nearly everyone despise and denounce monks and theologians alike? The pus oozing from a few sores spreads its sickening stench over an otherwise healthy body and poisons it with its deadly infection. It would be a blessing, as you say, if Luther would exercise some self-control and show himself more like the Stoic Diogenes and less like Carneades.[58] I wish he would at last consent to drop his insufferable truculence and deign to adopt a more moderate style of writing. But now that minds have been poisoned and inflamed, I am afraid it will be too late for the healing hand. How much better it would be to have cured these problems at the start instead of stirring up such a commotion. For as it was revealed to Elijah, the Lord is not, is not (I repeat), in the great and mighty wind that topples mountains and breaks the rocks in pieces, or in the earthquake, or the fire, but in the murmuring of a gentle breeze.[59] And Paul says, 'Let all bitterness and anger and indignation and clamour and blasphemy be put away from you with all malice. And be kind to one another, merciful, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.'[60] And in another passage, 'God is not the author of confusion, but of peace.'[61]

I am at a loss to think of any decent cloak that might cover up the intense bitterness this man feels. Where people disagree, one need not complain if they are strongly critical of one another. It is perhaps legitimate to go that far. But, as Cicero says, 'insults, abuse, angry outbursts, squabbling, and obstinate wrangling in debate always seem to me to lie beneath the dignity of philosophy.'[62] If Cicero says this about secular and speculative philosophy, which relies merely on human argument, how much greater respect should be paid to our holy philosophy, which rests on sure foundations and

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58 See Aulus Gellius 6.14.8–10, where the author contrasts the violence of Carneades, a skeptical philosopher of the second century BC, with the moderation and sobriety of his contemporary, Diogenes of Babylon, head of the Stoic school. Diogenes and Carneades were two of the three philosophers sent by Athens on an embassy to Rome in 155 BC, and it was on this occasion that their contrary styles were noted.

59 1 Kings 19:11–12, as rendered in the Vulgate

60 Eph 4:31–2. Ammonius quotes Erasmus' translation.

61 1 Cor 14:33, quoted in Greek

62 *De finibus* 1.27

comes to us from heaven? If glass is worth so much, what is the value of a pearl?[63]

I cannot help feeling very sad that Melanchthon has joined that faction,[64] for I think nature intended him to do great things for the humanities; but now some evil genius[65] has caused his books to be banned over a good part of the Christian world. For some time now, however, there has been circulating among us a happier rumour (whose origin is not clear), that Melanchthon is being reconciled to the church.[66] I do hope that, in this case at least, that treacherous goddess[67] is not deceiving us, or rather, I pray that Christ may soon restore Melanchthon to us, for he is a man of wide erudition and a brilliant linguist, who could be a valuable member of the church and an instrument of Christ. I believe that we ought never to lose hope in the goodness of Christ.

If, Erasmus, your work on Augustine will not allow you time for anything else,[68] we shall wait patiently for the appearance at long last of that fair-sized Greek volume you promised, containing a judicious selection from the well-tilled gardens of Chrysostom.[69]

But whoa! Enough of this nonsense! It is time to call a halt;[70] I do not want my loquacity to keep you any longer from much more important things. For myself, I get great pleasure from conversing with so distinguished a man as you, for I almost feel we are talking face to face. But I must remember your more important tasks. In concluding, Erasmus, let me urge you most strongly to stand firm against malicious tongues, as you have

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63 *Adagia* IV iii 69

64 Among sixteenth-century humanists, Philippus Melanchthon (Ep 454) came closest to being Erasmus' equal as a scholar, but the good relations between them were strained by Melanchthon's ardent support of Luther. For recent communication between the two, see Epp 1944, 1981–2.

65 Ie a spirit or daemon that brings bad fortune; see *Adagia* I i 72.

66 The theological and liturgical conservatism of Melanchthon's Saxon Visitation Articles, written in 1527 and published (with a preface by Luther) in 1528, had caused some in the evangelical camp to accuse Melanchthon of conceding too much to Rome while, at the same time, leading Catholic observers to conclude that the Wittenbergers were backing away from their more radical positions. Erasmus himself reported that the Lutherans were writing 'palinodes' (retractions) of their doctrines; see Ep 2013 n6.

67 Rumour (*Fama* in Latin) was often personified in antiquity as a goddess who mixes truth and falsehood; see eg Virgil *Aeneid* 4.173–88.

68 See Ep 2157.

69 See Epp 1950:22–5, 2093.

70 Literally 'time to remove my hand from the painting'; see *Adagia* I iii 19.

Philippus Melanchthon
Engraving by Albrecht Dürer, 1526
The couplet inscribed below the portrait reads,
'Dürer was able to paint the face of the living Philip;
His practised hand could not paint his mind.'
Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz,
Berlin
Photo: Walter Steinkopf

done so far, and not yield before the abuse that some are heaping on you. 'How we are to judge such people' (I prefer to say this in Greek, using the words of Demosthenes) 'is a matter for others to decide; for myself, I shall say only that they lack a sense of proportion.'[71] I believe that it is not entirely to your disadvantage, nor could it happen without Christ's blessing, that amid the general applause of the sensible men who are your staunch supporters, you also have your Momuses[72] to hound you:

> That no man on life's voyage may argue so:
> 'Alone I have escaped life's ills and woe.'[73]

Evil men are useful to the virtuous at least in so far as they can intervene at the right moment to rid the mind of arrogance. 'For truly, according to Solomon, slander humbles a man,[74] and no one is so insensitive to pain as not to suffer in his soul and be brought low when he falls victim to lying tongues.'[75] In your case I do not think there is much danger of this, for if nothing else, the torments of the stone have taught you all too well the lesson of humility. Yet there is no reason to be upset because the Lord has raised up a Hadad the Edomite against you[76] and sent a messenger of Satan to afflict you.[77]

There is a remark of yours that delighted me greatly; you say somewhere: 'Neither hatred nor friendship will make me leave the fellowship of the church.'[78] However men may judge you, I hope it will be said of you

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71 Demosthenes *Against Aristogiton* 1.43
72 Momus was a legendary fault-finder, first mentioned by Hesiod (c 700 BC).
73 Gregory of Nazianzus *Ad Vitalianum* 41–2
74 Eccles 7:8, cited by Basil (see following note) in a version different from that of the Vulgate and the Septuagint; the Vulgate has *calumnia conturbat sapientem* 'slander troubles the wise.'
75 Basil Ep 51 *Ad Bosporium*
76 Hadad was an enemy of Solomon; see 1 Kings 11:14.
77 In 2 Cor 12:7 Paul speaks of the 'thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan,' sent to torment him. 'Thorn in the flesh' is often taken to mean a physical ailment, in which case the reference here would be to Erasmus' calculus. But in his annotation on 2 Cor 12:7 (LB VI 793) Erasmus, following Ambrose, explains Paul's phrase as referring to malicious slanderers, which here fits the context better.
78 In Ep 2037:288–90, which was already in print. Whether accused by his Catholic critics of fostering the Lutheran heresy or prodded by the reformers themselves to join their ranks, Erasmus' answer was invariably that he would not depart from the 'fellowship,' 'community,' or 'consensus' of the church. See Epp 1007:78–90, 1273:30–1, 1275:32–4, 1337A:51, 1717:60–5, 2123:17–19, 2133:85–6,

what Titus Livius, according to St Jerome, wrote of Cato, that 'no one added to his glory by praising him, or harmed him by criticism.'[79] 'For envy feeds upon the living and is silent after death,'[80] and

> Time makes all things greater after death;
> And glory rises from the ashes to the lips of men.[81]

So you must endure with courage the serpents' hiss, especially since there are now more on our side than on theirs. I believe that before very long even the great rabbis will be a laughing stock to the humblest labourers, and justly so; for soon we shall witness a very different age, if I have guessed correctly.

I would commend your friend Karel Uutenhove to you,[82] but I see no need. Still, if it is possible for you to add anything to the kindness with which you enfold him, prompted by his merits and your own generous nature, I think he deserves to be bound to you by the closest ties of affection. When he could have enjoyed all the comforts of home, he chose instead to live in foreign parts, indeed to lodge with you, so that he might return to his native land a better educated man. May the Lord Jesus preserve you and keep you safe for the greater glory of his church, most excellent Erasmus, my honoured and respected friend! May he fill you with all spiritual joy and bring you at last to that place where joy will be forever full!

From the Charterhouse of St Maartensbos, 6 January at the beginning of the year 1529, by Roman reckoning

Always your sincere friend, Levinus Ammonius

2083 / From Guy Morillon Zaragoza, 6 January 1529

The manuscript of this letter, autograph throughout, was in the ill-fated Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It was first published as Ep 93 in Förstemann/Günther.

Guy Morillon (Epp 532, 1287), since 1515 a member of the imperial court and since 1518 one of Charles V's secretaries, was a humanist scholar in his own right and a trusted friend and ally of Erasmus.

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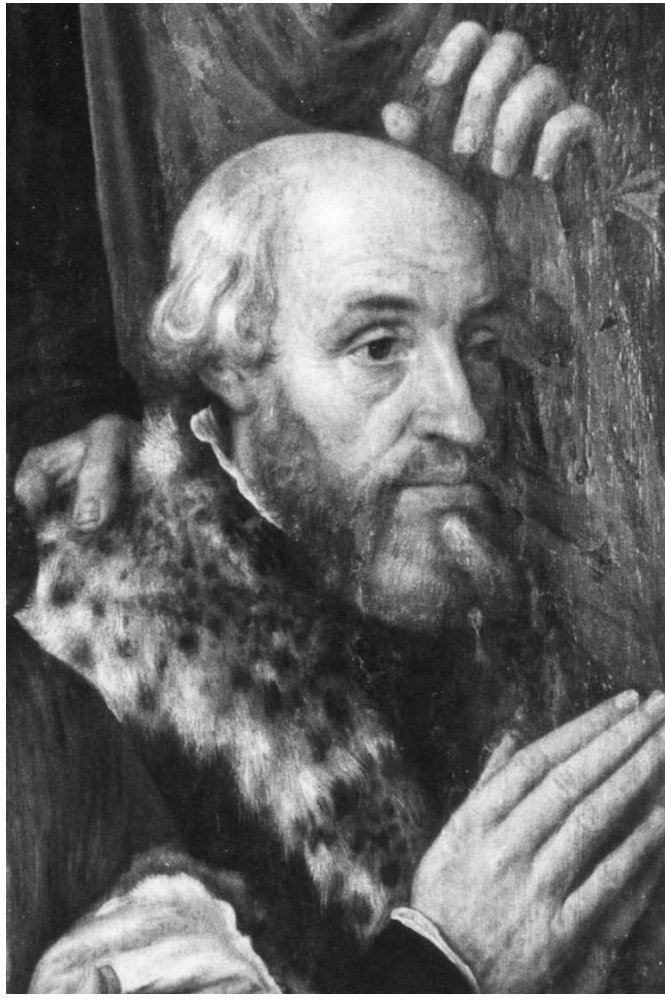
2134:152–5 and 203–6, 2136:111–13, 2175:24–7. On the role of 'the consensus of the church' in Erasmus' theology, see Ep 1708 and the literature cited there.

79 *Commentarium in Osee prophetam* 2.53–4

80 Ovid *Amores* 1.15.39

81 Propertius 3.1.23–4

82 See Ep 2093. And, on the content of this paragraph, cf Ep 2197:20–7.



Guy Morillon
From a panel of Michael Coxie's *Ascension of Christ*
Stadsmuseum Leuven, Belgium
Photo: P. Laes

Cordial greetings. Gaspard Trechsel, the bookseller,[1] passed on your greetings. The pleasure this gave me is easier to understand than to describe. I have spent several days here, totally engaged in scraping together some money so that I can return to you plated all over with gold; I hope my efforts will have some success.

There are many devoted fans of Erasmus here. Among them is Michael don Lope,[2] counsellor to the king, and a man of the highest influence not only with the legal profession, but with those who have been charged with the defence of the faith. He supports you with such energy against those vermin who cannot tolerate the translation of your works into Spanish[3] that he fully deserves the honour of a letter from you. There is nothing you could do that would give him more pleasure than this.[4] The celebrity that the name of Erasmus has acquired in Spain is a remarkable story; remarkable also is the delight that all good men take in your works, more and more of which are being translated into Spanish every day.

There are two things that people would dearly like you to do: first, that you produce the work *On Preaching* that you promised some time ago;[5] and secondly, that you do for the rest of the psalter what you did for the first four psalms.[6] Otherwise, it would be better if you had not promised the first or given us a taste of the second. These are the principal requests that I hear in these parts. Since you are able to fulfil them and are not doing so, it will be said of you that you are robbing God of his glory and the people of their salvation. But why am I saying these things to you? – it is not that you need advice from me.

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2083

1 Gaspard Trechsel (d 1570) was born in Lyon to the printer Jean Trechsel. In 1530 Gaspard and his brother Melchior took control of the family printing shop and turned out many handsome humanist editions. This is the only reference to Gaspard in Erasmus' correspondence.

2 Unidentified. The name is given as it occurs in Allen's text. Allen found a Don Lope de Urea listed as a gentleman in Charles V's household at this time but was not able to find out anything about him.

3 See Ep 1742 introduction and lines 181–6.

4 If Erasmus wrote such a letter, it has been lost.

5 Ie the *Ecclesiastes sive de ratione concionandi*, which would not be published until 1535; see Ep 1932 n25.

6 Erasmus' commentaries on the first four psalms are translated in CWE 63; see Epp 326, 1304 n43, 1426, and 1535. He wrote seven more, translated in CWE 64 and 65; see Epp 2017, 2266, 2285, 2428, 2608, 2852, and 3086.

Gaspard will give you a fuller account in person of the imprisonment of Jean Lalemand for treason, along with the rest of our news.[7] Farewell.

Zaragoza in Spain, 6 January 1529

G. Morillon

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam. In Basel

2084 / To Pierre de Mornieu Basel, 10 January 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. The addressee, Pierre de Mornieu (Ep 1777), was a medical humanist and abbot of the Cistercian abbey of Saint-Sulpice near Chambéry in Savoy. After studies at Basel (1523–5), Avignon, and (possibly) Turin, he was once again residing in his abbey.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO PIERRE DE MORNIEU, ABBOT OF SAINT-SULPICE, GREETING

People who are lazy about writing always blame the courier for the brevity of their letters, arguing that it would be pointless to entrust a long letter to someone who might turn out to be unreliable, for if the letter was not delivered, a lot of effort would be wasted, or if the bearer was dishonest enough to break the seal, a letter intended for one person might fall into several hands. On the other hand, if the bearer of the letter is a man of proven honesty, then they argue that there is no need for a long screed, since all the news could be conveyed better by the courier in person than by setting it down in writing.

I could use this latter excuse quite properly, since the courier who is on his way to you is Albanus, who is not just known to both of us, but dearly loved.[1] You will find out from him all the news from here, both public and

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7 Until falling victim to court intrigue in 1528, Jean Lalemand (Ep 1554) had been a secretary to Charles V and an extremely influential figure, from whom Erasmus received help with the payment of his imperial pension and in his efforts to silence his critics in Louvain. After a brief imprisonment, Lalemand was cleared of the charge of treason but never regained the emperor's favour. In 1540 he retired to his native Franche-Comté, where he became a canon of Besançon. Cf Ep 2163:88–117.

2084

1 Albanus Torinus of Winterthur (1489–1550), studied arts at Basel (MA in 1522) and then, after medical studies at Montpellier, joined the faculty of medicine

private. Many strange things are happening here. I pray that God will turn everything to good. I am pregnant with a stone in the bladder and suffer dreadfully, 'a victim of unpitying Orcus,' as Flaccus puts it.[2]

I could think of two excuses for your long silence: either that there is nobody available to carry a letter, or that you are so completely immersed in the Sacred Scriptures that you cannot tear yourself away from their honeyed sweetness once you have caught the flavour of it. I shall be content, however, if I hear you are in good health and have not forgotten me. There is no need for me to commend Albanus to you; I only wish his circumstances were considerably better than they are. If you ever fall in with the Alardet brothers,[3] please be kind enough to give them my best wishes. Farewell.

Basel, 10 January 1529

2085 / From Christoph von Carlowitz Besançon, 10 January 1529

After several months spent as a member of Erasmus' household (1527–8), the young Saxon nobleman Christoph von Carlowitz (Ep 1951 n7) had gone off to Dôle, and then to Besançon, to continue his studies (Epp 1983:59–61, 2010). In the summer of 1529 he entered the service of Duke George of Saxony, having been warmly recommended to the duke by Erasmus (Epp 2121:14–26, 2122, 2123:6–10, 2130:103–7, 2141:10–11, 2166:1–8). Consistently Erasmian in his efforts to promote religious peace in Saxony and the Empire, Carlowitz enjoyed his greatest influence in the reign of George's nephew, the Lutheran duke and elector Maurice of Saxony (1541–53).

The autograph of this letter, large portions of which were missing, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). The fragment was first published as Ep 94 in Förstemann/Günther.

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(1528) and commenced a series of Latin translations of Greek medical writers. He subsequently held professorships of rhetoric (1532) and medicine (1536) at Basel, and in 1532 was rector of the university. From 1545 until his death he was physician to Duke Christopher of Württemberg at Montbéliard. He was currently on his way to Montpellier via Savoy, where he presented Mornieu with a copy of his translation of Epiphanius (Basel: Cratander 1529), which was dedicated to the abbot.

2 Horace *Odes* 2.3.26. Orcus is the god of the underworld, here a personification of death.

3 On Amblard and Claude-Louis Alardet, both in the service of the duke of Savoy, and their connection with Erasmus, see Ep 1852.

. . . There are several kinds of Burgundy, not all of the same colour, but no one here knows which particular kind you like.[1] So let us know as soon as you can what your preference is.

I have nothing to say about C.[2] except that the friendship that you wished us to have seems to have made him more distant than he was before. As you may imagine, this does not trouble me, because of my affection for you. I do not think he is taking any action against you at present, since he is so occupied with his own affairs that he can hardly decide what to do with himself. I hear he was deprived of his canonry at the beginning of the year,[3] and today the news reached him of the death of Valentin's father, to whose generosity he owes almost everything.[4] He appears to be deeply stricken; so the quarrel between you is likely to be the last thing on his mind. If he is attempting anything, I suspect he is using the services of Nesen's brother,[5] who lives at Wittenberg. Last month he sent him a bundle of documents, but I do not yet know what was in them. Farewell.

Besançon, 10 January 1529

Your devoted servant, Christoph von Carlowitz

I was about to seal this letter when I realized that the last part of my book had not yet been transcribed in a clean copy. Since, however, I want my actions to conform to the promise I made in my letter about sending you the book,[6] I have dispatched the part that has been transcribed. When you have read it through, or rather when you have glanced at it (for why would you want to read it through?) – when, I say, you have glanced at it, will you return it to me, and at the same time, if it is not too much trouble, let me know if in recent months you have received a letter from the duke in

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2085

1 On Erasmus' need for good Burgundy wine, see Epp 1342:504–41, 2057 n1, 2115, 2241–2, 2329–30, Allen Ep 2348:7–9.

2 Doubtless Carinus; see Ep 2111 n2.

3 Carinus had a canonry at the collegiate church of St Michael in Beromünster, north of Luzern (Lucerne) in the Aargau; see Ep 920 introduction, and cf Ep 2152:21–2.

4 Ludwig Fürster, chancellor of Richard von Greiffenklau, archbishop of Trier; Valentin (Ep 1798) was probably his son.

5 Konrad Nesen (1493–1560), the brother of the late Wilhelm Nesen (Ep 1257 n3). At this time Konrad was studying law at Wittenberg where, like his brother, he was a friend of Melanchthon. After brief service as a *praeceptor* at the court of King Ferdinand (1530–2) he obtained a licentiate in law at Wittenberg and spent the rest of his life as a syndic of the city of Zittau in Lusatia, where he played a leading role in the introduction of the Reformation.

6 Ie in the missing portion of this letter; on the book, see Ep 1951:30–4.

which I am mentioned?[7] This, like all your other kindnesses, will be greatly appreciated. Farewell again, and excuse the rambling and careless nature of this letter.

[To] . . . Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, my friend and mentor, to whom I owe so much. In Basel

2086 / To Heinrich Eppendorf [Basel, c January 1529]

First published in the *Pirckheimeri Opera*, this letter is part of the renewed dispute between Erasmus and Eppendorf that had erupted at the beginning of February 1528 (details in Ep 1934 introduction). One of the provisions of the accord concluded between Eppendorf and Erasmus on 3 February 1528 (see n1) was that the latter would publish a book dedicated to the former. At the end of June 1528, Eppendorf wrote to Erasmus calling upon him to discharge this obligation (AK Ep 1321), but at the end of the year was still waiting for an answer (Ep 2081:28–9). Although Erasmus claimed never to have received Eppendorf's letter (see lines 48–50, and cf AK Ep 1321:9–11), the present letter may well be his reply to it. Allen assigned the approximate date on the basis that the Frankfurt book fair was impending (line 57) and that Erasmus was at work on *De vidua christiana* and the editions of Seneca and Augustine. Eppendorf's reply is Ep 2099.

The covenant of friendship[1] that binds us together was entered into so solemnly that it cannot be breached without incurring a most serious charge of bad faith. Yet, as you know, I have never needed your friendship. Even worms and beetles can cause harm, but what harm you can do, I am not sure. Certainly it is my wish to help everyone and harm no one. If it is fame you are after, you could win a more honourable name by other means than by belittling me. If it is money you want, even though I have very little, and what I have I have earned by my own hard work, I would be more likely to share it with a friend than with an enemy who resorts to threats. In any case, it would be more natural, considering my age and my present difficulties, for you to assist me from your purse than for me to cover your expenses.

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7 Duke George of Saxony; no such letter is extant.

2086

1 Ie the arbitrated settlement imposed by Bonifacius Amerbach and Beatus Rhenanus and signed by Erasmus and Eppendorf on 3 February 1538 (Epp 1937, 1992:304–11).

You know that, after your departure,[2] I went beyond what the arbitrators prescribed, for I did not want to give any excuse for breaching our recent settlement. But already a painful rumour was circulating here that you had bullied me into accepting terms that you yourself would refuse to submit to for three thousand gold pieces.[3] I put the best construction on this, supposing that you had said it before we shook hands on our agreement. Soon the rumour spread like wildfire through the whole of Germany, reaching as far as Aachen.[4] This too I accepted with a good grace. I sent off letters and scotched the rumour in a way that served your interests more than my own.[5] Then news of your bitterly hostile remarks were reported to me from so many quarters and from people of such standing that it would have been difficult to distrust the messengers or interpret the message as kindly meant.[6] Yet I did not let that conviction take root in my mind in case I should be responsible for ending the friendship we had patched up between us. I sincerely hope that all the reports that have reached me are without foundation.

But there is one thing, I believe, you will not deny: that at the very least you are questioning my good faith for not producing the book I promised in our pact. But a man of your experience knows that new books do not spring up easily. Moreover, you must be aware that not every subject would be appropriate for you. Everyone here knows that I have been so swamped with work on the correction of Augustine and Seneca and all the other things I have in hand that my friends are calling me 'murderer.'[7] Then I have had four letters demanding that I follow *The Christian Wife*, which I wrote for the queen of England,[8] with *The Christian Widow* for Mary, the emperor's sister and former queen of Hungary.[9] Remember also that I am joined in a deadly and unremitting war with a monstrous regiment of monks and theologians. In short, if you were my brother three times over, I could not have done

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2 On about 5 February 1528
3 For the rumour, see Epp 1991:26–34, 1992:168–71.
4 Where Johann von Vlatten (Ep 2088) might have heard it and reported it to Erasmus
5 See eg Ep 1992.
6 But cf Ep 2081:26–8.
7 Ie they accuse him of killing himself with work. On the editions of Augustine and Seneca see Epp 2157 and 2091.
8 *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (Ep 1727)
9 The request that Erasmus dedicate a work to Mary of Hungary came from her chaplain, Johann Henckel; see Epp 2011:43–56, 2110:2–5. On *De vidua christiana* see Ep 2100.

what you want before now. If I could have done it, I would not have needed anyone to remind me: that is clear enough from the fact that in other parts of our covenant I have gone beyond my obligations and done so ahead of time.

Furthermore, you know that no time limit was set for this matter, and there was the additional stipulation 'on condition that I had found you a true friend.'[10] If I procrastinated longer than was proper, you should have sent a reminder before resorting to threats and bitter words. It was the responsibility of the arbitrators to set the time. But people are saying that you wrote me a letter remonstrating with me in a most angry manner over my bad faith, when the truth is that not a syllable ever reached me.[11] So how can there be a breach of faith, when no time is set? Even if a time had been set, one does not rush to accuse a person of bad faith when a promise is not kept. Otherwise, every time a debtor fails to make a payment on the appointed day, he should be accused of bad faith. How absurd this is, no one knows better than you. Moreover, a contract involving a deadline always has an escape clause in case of illness or some other unavoidable circumstance. This provision ought to be stronger where no deadline has been set.

All the same, I shall not build my case on your present attitude or on the conditional terms of my commitment in case I give the impression of going back on my word. I had intended, if at all possible, to fulfil our agreement by the forthcoming fair. But if there is truth in the stories I hear from many quarters, I am not sure how I should proceed. If you have now adopted an openly hostile attitude, what will people say if the book appears? Surely either that you were so unscrupulous that you bullied Erasmus into doing this or that I am so timid that I will do anyone's bidding. You see, I think, that the situation would be equally discreditable to both of us. But the settlement stipulates that the case be settled without discredit to either party.[12] The most illustrious Duke George thinks there is complete harmony between us – an intimate of his wrote to tell me so.[13] He believes it was his letter that brought this about.[14]

People tell me that the knight Otto is now in danger of losing his head.[15] They have sent me your letter to him and the one you wrote to Duke

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10 Ep 1934:533–5
11 Cf Ep 2081:28–9, Ep 2099:2.
12 Ep 1937:7–8
13 Probably Simon Pistoris; see Epp 1940:2–3, 1951.
14 See Ep 1951:4–11.
15 Otto von Pack; see Ep 1934 n80.

George in a similar vein.[16] I shall not revive painful memories of things that happened before we repaired our friendship. Try to act in such a way that no one will find you lacking in honesty or good faith. For if it becomes apparent that your reconciliation to me was a sham, you are wise enough to guess what the duke and other mortals will think of you. I shall take no further steps until you assure me by letter of your present feelings.

2087 / From Ludwig Baer [Basel, c January 1529]

The manuscript is an autograph in a volume entitled 'Variorum epistolae ad Erasmus' (fol 4) in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel. Ludwig Baer (Ep 488), professor of theology, cathedral canon, and provost of the collegiate church of St Peter's at Basel, was a trusted friend from whom Erasmus had often sought advice on theological subjects (see Ep 2136). Always a stout defender of the papal church against the reformers, Baer had now, like Erasmus, decided to leave Basel because of the triumph of the Reformation there. But Baer's departure took place about three months before that of Erasmus. On 11 January he resigned his provostship (BAO II 274), and on 13 February Oecolampadius reported that Baer had departed 'the previous month' (BAO II 282). Baer appears to have gone first to Thann in Upper Alsace, where he owned a house and enjoyed income as a canon. It seems that only in the autumn, soon after 22 October 1529, did he move to Freiburg, where both Erasmus and the cathedral chapter had already settled; see Allen Ep 2225:1–3. In 1531 he declined the offer from the university of a professorship in theology, preferring to live on the income from his paternal inheritance and his ecclesiastical benefices. Apart from a visit to Rome in 1535, Baer spent the rest of his life (d 1554) in Freiburg and was buried in the minster.

Master Erasmus, kindest of men and my most respected friend, I request your Excellency to be so kind as to write a letter in your own hand, when you have leisure to do so, or at least to append your signature to a letter, which, with your consent, I could show with an easy mind to anyone anywhere in the world. In the letter you should state your reasons for continuing to reside in Basel and affirm that you are bound to the Catholic church with unbreakable ties and that you stand opposed to the champions of the new gospel, Lutherans and Oecolampadians. I shall keep such a letter by me wherever I go; it will be for me a truly Christian and lasting pledge of your good will towards me and a precious and valued treasure. But I shall

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16 See Epp 1934:419–30, 1951:16–21.

share it widely with others, in a manner consonant with your dignity, for the edification of many.

You will recognize the hand.

2088 / To Johann von Vlatten

Basel, 24 January 1529

This letter was appended to the second edition of the *Ciceronianus* (Basel: Froben, March 1529), the first edition of which (Ep 1948) had been dedicated to Vlatten, an old friend who was counsellor to the duke of Jülich-Cleves (Ep 1390). That first edition had inadvertently offended a number of people whom Erasmus had no wish to antagonize. Among these were old friends, like Juan Luis Vives, who were carelessly omitted from the list of those praised for their accomplishments as Latin stylists. More seriously, French humanists took umbrage at an ironic jest comparing the great Guillaume Budé unfavourably to the Paris printer Josse Bade as a Ciceronian. See Ep 1948 introduction. Erasmus quickly made attempts to limit the damage and repair relations (eg Epp 2021, 2046), and in the second edition of the dialogue he made changes and insertions with the same aim.

The translation is by Betty Knott. It is taken, with minor alterations, from CWE 28 338–41. The annotation has been redone, incorporating the information supplied by Dr Knott in her notes.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE HONOURABLE JOHANN VON VLATTEN, GREETING

My dear Vlatten, is it fate or some power interfering in our lives that puts this unpleasant streak in human affairs, so that the very things that many people like arouse violent antipathies in others? I recently published two books at the same time, both at the same birth so to speak, one on pronunciation, the other on the imitation of Cicero.[1] The former offended no one, but did not find many friends; the second was eagerly bought up, but also gave considerable offence to quite a number of people. They complain that some persons were passed over in silence who should not have been, that others were not treated with proper respect, that some received less than their due and others more.

For the point I was making, seven examples taken from ancient literature would have been enough, so far was I from intending to make a methodical survey of every known writer, especially when this section is

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2088

1 *De recta pronuntiatione* and the *Ciceronianus* were published together in the same volume. Ep 1949 was the dedicatory letter for *De recta pronuntiatione*.

secondary to my main argument.[2] If I had wanted to expand my material to the full at such a point, I could very properly have had quoted against me the Greek adage 'The extra load is too big for the saddlebag.'[3] I could with more justification be thought a fool for naming so many than for leaving out a few, and I should have been much more of a fool if I had tried to assess the style of every person who has published anything, when there are so many young men now in Germany, France, England, Hungary, and Poland who can both speak and write good Latin. I only wish we had made as much progress in piety!

The fact that I made no mention of some close friends whom I see every day[4] shows that I did not omit anyone through ill will or forgetfulness. I knew that some were so maidenly modest that they could not bear to have their names mentioned in a publication – a thing as bad as having them proclaimed from the stage, for sending a book out into the world is definitely a kind of histrionic activity; some are so fastidious that one wouldn't know how they should be treated, and some so cantankerous and touchy that no matter how you stroke them, they kick back.[5]

Now if I had only praised the people whose names I mention, and if I had praised everyone without exception, I would have spoiled the fruits I wanted this work to produce – the young learn a great deal from critical assessments like the ones here, as they get into the habit of reading always with discrimination and recognizing what to avoid and what to try to do. There is a vast difference between criticism and eulogy.

The reason I included the review was to make my meticulous pursuer of the Ciceronian turn of phrase deny the honour of the title 'Ciceronian' to every one of them. This was done in the character of Nosoponus, who in this part of the work displays a judgment far from sound. However, I did not want the refusal of the title to offend anyone, so I added quite a dash of praise to what was said about various individuals, apportioning it so that no one could find me deficient in generosity, and everyone would recognize

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2 The main portion of the dialogue is devoted to arguing the silliness of an imitation of Cicero so rigid that much good and useful Latin, including the vocabulary of Christian discourse, is ruled unacceptable to a good style. This leads to a consideration of which authors – ancient, medieval, and modern – can or cannot be considered 'Ciceronian.' It was the presumed slights or insults to his contemporaries in this 'secondary' discussion that got Erasmus into trouble.

3 *Adagia* IV ii 69

4 Including Beatus Rhenanus; see Ep 2008:15–31.

5 Horace *Satires* 2.1.20: 'If you stroke him the wrong way, he kicks back.'

that each man had been given his due – which was done so impartially that I don't suppress the names even of enemies like Hutten and Zúñiga, or deprive them of the praise that they deserve.[6] As for the people who took offence at Budé's being treated insultingly,[7] I imagine they now regret the attitude they took. Others with equal effrontery muttered that I was jealous of Longueil, while hardly anyone has commended him more warmly[8] – though he interspersed various remarks in his writings that make one suspect he didn't have a particularly high opinion of my abilities. But I never take offence at freely expressed opinions in men of learning. If they are right, one can learn from them; if not, it's a human enough failing, and nothing to justify the breakup of a friendship between good men. I wish there were many Longueils to joke about the Dutch word-spinner,[9] provided they did good service to Christian learning and Christian faith – which he would have done nobly, in my opinion, if he had been granted longer life.

Moreover, to make sure the words of praise bestowed on the various literary men were not discounted as having no weight, I invented a character who was a considerable scholar and a man of sense, apart from the silliness of his excessive admiration of Cicero.

But oh, how transient is the life of man! The tide of mortal things flows out as fast as the Euripus,[10] or faster, if any faster tide there is. Even as we speak, the hour is gone, as the satirist says;[11] even as we review our friends, we find we have lost one, and not one we valued least – I refer to Jakob Wimpfeling of Sélestat.[12] He could have been counted happy if his old age had not coincided with these very troubled times. From his earliest years onwards he was educated in the noblest subjects, first at Sélestat under Ludwig Dringenberg of Westphalia.[13] Later at Freiburg and then at Heidelberg

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6 See CWE 28 427, 429; cf Epp 1331 n24 (Hutten), 1260 n36 (Zúñiga).
7 Ep 2021 introduction
8 Ep 1675:15–27, 1706, 1707:21–3
9 Ie Erasmus himself; see Ep 1706:6–7.
10 A channel between the island of Euboea and the mainland of Greece, where the sea rushes in with great speed; see *Adagia* I ix 62.
11 Persius *Satires* 5.153
12 Wimpfeling (Ep 224) had died on 15 November 1528. Erasmus inserted an appreciative sentence about him into the second edition of the *Ciceronianus* (CWE 29 427).
13 Ludwig Dringenberg of Dringenberg in Westphalia (c 1410–1477) attended the school of the Brethren of the Common Life in Deventer before matriculating at Heidelberg, where he took his MA in 1434. He then moved to Sélestat, where he became the founder and first rector of the grammar school where many of the Alsatian humanists, including Wimpfeling, received their early education.

he acquired skill in canon law, to which he added a considerable knowledge of theology, and was besides versed in every good discipline. As for literary skills, he demonstrated in both poetry and prose all that one could ask of a theologian or a man living at that period. He was called to Speyer, where he filled the office of preacher with distinction.[14]

While there, this pious man on fire with love of heavenly things grew weary of this world, which, as John says, lies totally in wickedness,[15] and determined to retreat from it. He had as his companion in this intention Christoph von Utenheim,[16] a man both scholarly and of the purest personal integrity. 'That he might flee with nothing to the Christ who has nothing,'[17] Wimpfeling resigned what income he had from the church – it was indeed enough to provide a decent livelihood. Christoph, however, went no further with the plan when he was called to the office of bishop,[18] for his friends put forward the view that if his holiness of mind were combined with authority, he would win more men for Christ than if he hid himself away. But Wimpfeling, rejoicing in his poverty, persevered in the course he had begun. Returning to Heidelberg,[19] he expounded the text of Jerome and other sacred authors. He also published books that were a means of instructing the young and inspiring priests to seek piety and chastity.[20] He did not refuse because of his concern for the spiritual life to act as tutor to

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In addition to offering instruction in religion and morals that broke away from traditional glosses and commentaries, he introduced his students to classical authors and the church Fathers.

14 Wimpfeling's university studies began in 1464 at Freiburg, where he took his BA before moving briefly to Erfurt (1468–9) and then to Heidelberg (from 1469). After taking his MA in 1471 he studied canon law for a time but soon switched to theology while still teaching in the faculty of arts. From 1484 to 1498 he lived in Speyer, where he held a benefice and functioned for a time as cathedral preacher. In 1496 he received a licence in theology.

15 1 John 5:19

16 Ep 598

17 Thomas à Kempis *Imitation of Christ* 3.37

18 Utenheim became bishop of Basel in 1502.

19 Erasmus has the sequence of events wrong here. Wimpfeling returned to Heidelberg in 1498 as professor of poetry and rhetoric. He relinquished the post in 1501, and it was then that he, Utenheim, and Johann Geiler von Keysersberg made their abortive attempt to 'retreat from the world.' Wimpfeling then retired to the Williamite monastery in Strasbourg,

20 For example, *Adolescentia* (Strasbourg: M. Flach 1500), which long remained the definitive work in Germany on humanistic education, and *De integritate* (Strasbourg: J. Knobloch 1505), a protest against clerical greed and immorality

Christoph von Utenheim
From a stained glass window, 1522
Historisches Museum, Basel

a number of young persons for whom the future held great promise. Outstanding among this noble group in learning, integrity, openness, and wisdom is at the present time the noble Jakob Sturm,[21] to whose counsel not only the famous city of Strasbourg, but almost the whole of Germany owes the greatest debt.

His spiritual outspokenness did not fail to arouse hostility. A tired old man suffering from hernia, Wimpfeling was summoned to Rome, thanks to the efforts of the Augustinian monks, for writing somewhere that Augustine was not a monk – or certainly not like the accepted idea of an Augustinian monk today:[22] the Augustinians themselves represent the saint in pictures and booklets with a long beard, a black habit, and a leather belt. The fire started by this tiny spark was on the point of developing into a great conflagration, but Julius II intervened to extinguish it,[23] with the approval of all good men.

Besides other conflicts that made trial of his virtue, he was much grieved by this fatal division of the whole church, which all but destroyed his desire to live.[24] So after his unsuccessful attempts at solitude and withdrawal, when his years began to weigh upon him, he went to live at Sélestat with his sister Magdalene.[25] His two nephews, her sons, whom he had always loved like a father, he left at his death well set up in both mind and morals. One of them, Jakob Spiegel,[26] became well known as a lawyer and acted as counsellor to the emperor Maximilian and then to King Ferdinand. The younger, Johannes Maius,[27] recently succeeded his brother in the service of King Ferdinand, and made himself very popular at court by his civilized mind and sociable manners.

I have not yet made up my mind whether rejoicing or sorrow is the proper response to Wimpfeling's death: he reached almost his eightieth year,

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21 Ep 302:14n

22 Wimpfeling had asserted this vehemently and repeatedly in his *De integritate* (see n20 above).

23 Cf Ep 333:142–5.

24 See Epp 1067, 1517.

25 Magdalene (d 1532) was Wimpfeling's younger sister. By 1515, when her brother moved in with her, she had been twice widowed.

26 Ep 323:13n

27 After studying at Heidelberg and Freiburg, Maius (1502–36), Spiegel's half-brother, entered the imperial chancellery in 1520 and in 1526 succeeded Spiegel as secretary to King Ferdinand. There is no record of any personal contact between Maius and Erasmus.

and would have lived longer if he had been prepared to pay any attention to his failing physical powers; he was given his release from the present age, which is the wickedest one can imagine; and I have no doubt that he now enjoys with those in heaven the rewards of a virtuous life.

But to return to the subject. Some time after the publication of the *Ciceronianus*, I discovered that this very topic had been discussed in three letters exchanged between Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola[28] and Pietro Bembo.[29] Pico lets his argument range over a considerable number of topics; Bembo holds much the same views as I do, for he says he is only speaking of intellects of outstanding ability. Nor does he dissuade people from reading good authors, but he does urge that Cicero be taken as the only model for imitation, and indeed, a much more difficult thing, for emulation.[30] I am taking issue only with those who are so committed to this irrational creed that they reject with incredible disgust anything that does not conform.

I have gone over the book and emended a few passages, and have also added a few names. For when it was first going through the press, a noisy troublemaker suddenly turned up who considerably distracted my attention and interrupted its progress.[31] Some persons are born for nothing except to create trouble to people trying to do something decent, while they have nothing to fill their own time except gambling, whoring, guzzling, and boasting. Farewell.

Basel, 24 January 1529

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28 Gianfrancesco Pico (1469–1533) was the nephew of the more famous Giovanni, whose works he prepared for posthumous publication. Gianfrancesco himself wrote works of philosophy and theology as well as poetry. In the *Ciceronianus* Gianfrancesco is described as 'too much of a philosopher and theologian' to be included among the Ciceronians.

29 The great Venetian humanist Pietro Bembo (Ep 2106), whose works had only recently attracted Erasmus' interest; see Ep 2059 nn4, 7. Ep 2106 would mark the inauguration of a warmly friendly correspondence destined to last until Erasmus' death.

30 The exchange of letters between Pico and Bembo, *De imitatione* (1512–13), was published by Froben at Basel in 1518. In the third edition of the *Ciceronianus*, Nosoponus (the spokesman of strict Ciceronianism) says: 'How can you justify naming him [Pico] among the Ciceronians? – when discussing imitation with Pietro Bembo, he condemned the Cicero-imitators' (CWE 28 416). For a fuller discussion, with bibliography, of the exchange between Pico and Bembo, see CWE 28 560 n260.

31 Eppendorf; see Ep 1934.

2089 / From Pieter Gillis Antwerp, 2 January [1529]

The autograph of this letter, which was first published as Ep 107 in Enthoven, is in the Rehdiger Collection in the University Library at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.1). Allen assigned the year-date on the basis of the connection with Epp 2055, 2063, 2112.

For recent developments in Erasmus' friendship with Pieter Gillis (Ep 184), town clerk at Antwerp, see Epp 1671 n6, 1696, 1740. This is Gillis' last surviving letter to Erasmus.

TO MASTER ERASMUS FROM PIETER GILLIS, GREETING

Someone from St Michael's[1] had a copy of that rubbish written by the Minorite,[2] but I am sorry to say he returned it. I arranged through friends for him to get it back, but the Minorite refused, for the University of Louvain has not only forbidden its publication, but has told him to suppress it altogether. I have tried one way and another to help with this business, but to no effect.

Herman of Friesland left me this letter for you from the bishop of Palermo.[3] Up to now there has been no courier available (I have also spoken about this to Erasmus Schets).[4] So I have entrusted the letter to the Master of the Posts,[5] who has promised solemnly to see that it reaches you.

In the meantime, dear Erasmus, if my prayers have any influence with you, I beg and implore you to kindly return the documents written and

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2089

1 Ie the Premonstratensian abbey of St Michael at Antwerp

2 The reference is probably to a manuscript copy of Frans Titelmans' *Collationes quinque super epistolam ad Romanos*, which would be published at Antwerp in May. See Ep 2063:59–61.

3 Jean (II) de Carondelet (Ep 1276) was archbishop of Palermo (a see that he never visited) as well as dean of Besançon and provost of St Donatian in Bruges. He resided at Mechelen and was a leading official at the Netherlands court during the regencies of Margaret of Austria (d 1530) and Mary of Hungary. The letter from him was probably a reply to Ep 2055, which may not have reached Erasmus until the beginning of March; see Ep 2112:20. On Haio Herman of Friesland, for whom Erasmus had recently written letters of recommendation to Érard de la Marck and Carondelet (Epp 2054–5), see Epp 1978, 2108.

4 Ep 2115

5 Quite possibly Johann Baptista von Taxis (d 1541), the current head of the family that had organized the mail service in the Hapsburg hereditary lands and extended it into an international system. In 1520 Charles V had confirmed Johann Baptista as 'chief et maistre general des noz postes.'

signed in my hand[6] or else to send me a formal release in connection with your affairs. For if anything should happen to either of us, there could be very serious trouble for me and my children, and I am sure you would not want this to happen. Every day in the courts[7] I see with my own eyes how treacherous the world is and how often the best of men are taken in. If you relieve me of this worry, I shall be most grateful. I ask you, therefore, not to fail in your duty.

I hear you will be with us this spring.[8] Nothing could give me greater pleasure. Whatever little fortune I am blessed with is all at your disposal. There is no reason for you to move from pillar to post: there is perhaps no place where you could live more quietly or more comfortably than here. I know your nature and I know your tastes better than most others.

Here we have heard absolutely nothing about a revolution. The peace with our neighbours remains very secure. Meanwhile, dear Erasmus, I wish you well.

Antwerp, 25 January

To Erasmus of Rotterdam, my father and greatly respected mentor

2090 / To Ferdinand of Austria Basel, 27 January 1529

For eighteen months Erasmus had been contemplating leaving Basel (Ep 1926 n8), where the triumphant progress of the Reformation under the leadership of his former friend, Johannes Oecolampadius, was more than he could bear (Epp 1943:44–5, 2000 n4). In the autumn of 1528 his desire to flee grew stronger (Epp 2029:99, 2038:1, 2054:4–5), but he was not sure where he should go. For a variety of reasons, including his unwillingness to be a courtier or a partisan to any of the warring monarchs of Europe, he had already turned down flattering invitations from the rulers of England, France, The Netherlands, Austria, and Poland (see CWE 14 xix–xx). But smaller, more peaceful places beckoned. Besançon, Cologne, and Aachen had all been recommended to him (Epp 2112:5–11, 2120:120–1, 2137, 2146, 2159); Speyer was attractive (Epp 2107, 2112, 2136); he had been warmly invited to Augsburg (Epp 2029:98–100, 2145); and

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6 Possibly documents that Gillis had signed in connection with his undertakings on Erasmus' behalf in 1528: see Epp 1993, 1999, 2001, 2014.

7 The Latin is *in foro* (in the forum), a phrase that most often means 'in the courts,' which seems to fit the context here.

8 Gillis had evidently learned, perhaps through Haio Herman, that Erasmus was determined to leave Basel and that he had mentioned Brabant as a possible place of refuge; see Ep 2055:13–21.

he could have settled in Trent (Ep 2097 n4). By now, however, his eye had fallen on the quiet university town of Freiburg im Breisgau. It was not too far from Basel and the Froben press; it was in Austrian Hapsburg territory but at a safe distance from the court at Vienna; and it was still thoroughly Catholic.

Erasmus' motive in writing this letter was doubtless to elicit an invitation from Ferdinand to settle in Freiburg. In February he renewed the request in a letter to Ferdinand's minister, Bernhard von Cles (Ep 2107), and then in March he wrote directly to Ferdinand (Ep 2130:104). Epp 2145:33–4, 2158:45–7, 2161:39–44, and 2196:62–4 show that the petition was successful. In letters no longer extant, Ferdinand wrote to Erasmus from Speyer, probably in March, repeating his earlier invitation to Vienna (Epp 2000, 2005), but at the same time he also wrote to the town council of Freiburg, commending Erasmus to their care. On Erasmus' move to Freiburg in April, see Ep 2149 introduction.

TO HIS MOST SERENE MAJESTY FERDINAND, KING OF HUNGARY AND BOHEMIA, ETC FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Out of respect for your Majesty and in recognition of your great kindness to me, it has been my constant prayer, dear Ferdinand, that you, who bring glory on the royal name, may enjoy such success as befits your nobility and the long line of emperors and mighty kings who have preceded you and as your own upright and godly character deserves. I reckoned, too, that a great prince like you, endowed with such a nature, could have no better fortune than to receive or preserve or extend his realm without loss of human blood. This has also been my prayer for your brother Charles, our invincible emperor, whom I have never ceased to venerate, as is my duty, with a devotion that matches your own. But now that I see my first wish for you has not come true, I am delighted that, with heaven's help, you have achieved the next best thing. You could hardly believe the pleasure I got from a rumour that reached us lately, especially since it was followed by more detailed and reliable accounts in letters from my friends,[1] that you had brought the kingdoms of Hungary and Bohemia under your control without great carnage and at no serious cost in human blood.[2]

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2090

1 Cf Ep 2030:43–6.

2 Ferdinand's entry into Hungary in 1527–8 had been deceptively easy. In May 1529, however, the Turks would launch a counterattack, capturing Buda in September and laying siege to Vienna in September–October. See Epp 1935 nn5 and 8, 1977 n20.

I find little to my liking in those Roman triumphs whose splendour was judged in proportion to the numbers of the enemy reported killed, of towns and cities put to the torch, and of people left childless, orphaned, or widowed, followed by the ghastly spectacle of large numbers of wounded men and captives being dragged through the streets, as if it were not enough to crush the enemy without also adding insult to injury. But there can be no more glorious victory than that which is won with the lowest possible loss of life and which is as far removed as possible from the sort of victory that the Greeks call 'Cadmean.'[3] For then the victor wins greater renown for his wisdom and restraint than for his courage or even his good fortune. Success purchased by the misery of countless others is hardly laudable. Sometimes the reduction of a single town or fortress costs such heavy losses that the victor sheds as many tears as the vanquished. How much did it cost the Greeks in loss of life to capture Troy? And remember that during the siege the plague carried off nearly as many as the sword. But you have won the large and wealthy kingdom of Hungary, which was under the control of a usurper and disrupted everywhere by internal conflicts, with minimal losses to your own side and no great cost to the enemy.

It was written, unless I am mistaken, of Julius Caesar that 'he brought the gods into battle with him.'[4] He recognized his own good fortune when he said, 'I came, I saw, I conquered.'[5] How much more appropriate these words would be to you, a prince of exceptional piety and rectitude, who almost without a struggle, merely by appearing on the scene, settled the serious turmoil in Hungary, gained a great kingdom for himself, and drove out the usurper! Could any victory be more laudable than this, a victory with such little bloodshed that one might even congratulate the enemy for falling into the hands of so wise and merciful a conqueror? I have no doubt that all the wisest heads in that land are rejoicing in their defeat, for sometimes defeat turns out to be a blessing. Can anyone fail to recognize that such a happy outcome is evidence of the propitious hand of God? For when the blessing of heaven is won by the integrity, piety, and gentleness of the victor, there we have true success. God himself, in his goodness and power, promises in Holy Scripture that he will defend his own when they rely on his help and do not depart from the path of justice. 'And all that they do,' he

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3 Ie a victory that is disastrous even for the victors; see *Adagia* II viii 34.
4 It was in fact said of Hector, in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 13.82.
5 Caesar's laconic description of his victory over Pharnaces II, king of Pontus; see Suetonius *Divus Iulius* 37.

says, 'will prosper'[6] – a magnificent promise, coming from one who cannot lie and to whom all things are possible![7] Under his auspices even an apparent disaster can have a happy outcome. On the other hand, when wicked men imagine that their actions are being carried along on the favouring winds of destiny, there are no triumphs, only a trap set by their evil genius that lures them on to destruction.

For this success, illustrious King Ferdinand, we first give thanks to God, who is king of kings; then we congratulate you on your piety, good sense, moderation, and clemency, never doubting that equal or greater successes await you in other fields if you hold on firmly, as I am sure you will, to those qualities of mind that make you pleasing in the eyes of God. Nor do our congratulations go to you alone, but to your kingdom also, which would assuredly have perished if heaven had not given it a great and virtuous prince with the will to calm the turbulent waters and the strength to succeed.

You see, King Ferdinand, what mighty kingdoms rest upon your shoulders and what heavier burdens await you. You see the dangerous turmoil of our times. Such stormy waters demand a skilful and vigilant captain. Your character and your promising beginnings give us hope that you will prove such a captain. We have watched with deep sorrow the two chief monarchs of the world at odds with one another for so many years,[8] and all the while deadly factions, under pretext of promoting the gospel, are every day putting down roots in one place after another, like some vicious fern, and now cover almost the whole of the earth. If I understand anything about human affairs, I think that the present situation is of itself a sufficient reason for our princes to compose their differences and agree to share authority and work together, so that the Christian religion, which is being hammered on all sides, may be restored to a happier state. I see no end to our troubles as long as kings continue to quarrel, bishops slumber, priests cling grimly to what they have, monks concern themselves only with guarding their own domain, theologians fight with articles and pointless documents, and the people are left to believe or do whatever they want. All I can do is pray to God that he will at last show mercy on our sins, which have brought these evils upon us, and send down such wisdom to our kings and to the leaders of the church as will bring back true piety among us with peace and concord.

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6 Ps 1:3
7 Heb 6:18; Matt 19:26
8 Charles V and Francis I

I have gone on longer than I intended and longer than your busy life allows, but I hope you will be kind enough to forgive me. Deep feelings recognize no limits. I know that one usually excuses congratulations that arrive late, when it is impossible[9] to express one's feeling straight away. This was the first courier to turn up to whom I could safely entrust what I wished to say. May the Lord Jesus continue to prosper your illustrious Majesty for the general good of the whole world!

Basel, 27 January 1529

2091 / To Piotr Tomicki Basel, January 1529

This is the dedicatory letter for Erasmus' second edition of Seneca (Basel: Froben, March 1529). Erasmus had long been dissatisfied with the first edition of 1515 (see Ep 1341A:449–77), and once the edition of Jerome was out of the way in 1524–5 (Ep 1465), he was free to contemplate a new and better edition of Seneca. The search for manuscripts commenced in December 1525 and continued into the autumn of 1528, after the printing of the new edition had already begun. Meanwhile, progress on Seneca was impeded by simultaneous preoccupation with the preparation of the Froben Augustine (Ep 2157), and Erasmus complained that the labours involved would be the death of him (Epp 2070:9–10, 2079:70–2). By the end of February 1529 the printing of Seneca had been completed in time for the Frankfurt book fair (Ep 2108). For a more detailed account of the preparation of the edition and the progress of the printing, see Allen's introduction to this letter.

It should be noted that in neither of his editions did Erasmus distinguish between the two Senecas known to modern scholarship: the rhetorician Seneca the Elder (c 54 BC–C AD 39), author of the *Controversiae* and the *Suasoriae*, and his more prolific son, the Stoic philosopher, statesman, and dramatist Seneca the Younger (c 4 BC–AD 65), author of everything else. Both bore the name Lucius Annaeus Seneca, and all through the Middle Ages the life and works of the two had been merged into one. Erasmus knew that 'Seneca' had a son named Seneca who had two brothers (see lines 407–8), and he suspected that the tragedies had been written by one of the sons (lines 560–2), but otherwise he attributed the works of both father and son to his composite 'Seneca.' Erasmus might have learned the truth about the two Senecas from book 19 of the *Commentaria urbana* of Raffaele Maffei of Volterra (1506), but he clearly did not. It was left to Justus Lipsius, in chapter 1, book 1 of his *Electa* (1580), to make

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9 Reading *abest* for the *adest* of the text, as the sense of the passage seems to require. The phrase is modelled on Cicero *Ad familiares* 2.7.1.

Tomb of Piotr Tomicki
Courtesy of Polska Akademia Nauk, Instytut Sztuki, Warsaw

the definitive case for two Senecas and for the attribution of the *Controversiae* and the *Suasoriae* to the Seneca the Elder.

On Piotr Tomicki (1464–1535), bishop of Cracow, influential counsellor of King Sigismund I of Poland and patron of humanist learning, see Epp 1919, 1953.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND PIOTR, BISHOP OF CRACOW AND CHANCELLOR[1] OF THE KINGDOM OF POLAND, FROM DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

My lord bishop, someone may perhaps wonder why it is that, on the very threshold of this work, my Seneca makes its appearance, contrary to my usual practice, with a different name from that in the previous dedication.[2] Other authors, it is true, often dedicate the same book to several persons,[3] some ascribe the various chapters of a single work to different people, and some add various appendices and assign these to persons other than the one to whom the work as a whole is dedicated. But up to this point my practice has been consistent; indeed, although I had personally presented the most reverend William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury, with one piece of work, the *Hecuba* of Euripides,[4] later at the time of publication, when I added the *Iphigenia in Aulis*, I sent the combined volume to him.[5] Many people can attest that the original book of *Adages*, which I dedicated to the illustrious Lord Mountjoy,[6] was a very slim volume. The present size of the work is obvious to everyone, yet I have changed nothing on the title-page. Clearly, I could have done with my 'chiliads' and 'centuries' what the learned and pious Caelius of Rovigo did with the sixteen books to which he gave the title *Antiquae lectiones*.[7] But so far from following such a self-serving course, I have issued several books without any dedication. Even less have I imitated the impudent example of those who have dedicated the same work

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2091

1 Actually vice-chancellor
2 The first edition had been dedicated to Thomas Ruthall, bishop of Durham (Ep 325); cf line 27 below.
3 Cf Ep 1341A:136–55.
4 Ep 188
5 Ep 208
6 Epp 126, 211
7 Lodovico Ricchieri of Rovigo (1469–1525), otherwise known as Caelius Rhodiginus, published his *Antiquarum lectionum libri* in 1516 (Venice: A. Manuzio; reprinted by Froben at Basel in 1517), each of the sixteen books of which was dedicated to a different person. Cf Ep 469:10n.

to several people, changing nothing but the preface – thus obtaining, as the saying goes, 'several sons-in-law from the same daughter.'[8]

Since I have followed this practice consistently up to the present day, the reader will be all the more astonished to see that, contrary to precedent, the work that was formerly dedicated to Thomas, bishop of Durham, now bears another man's name. I assure you, my lord bishop, that this did not happen by chance or through an oversight, but was a deliberate choice; for by this device I wished to make clear to everyone that the previous edition was not my work, although, relying unwisely on the assurances of a friend, I did contribute a preface to it. At Cambridge, having obtained several manuscripts of Seneca, I enlisted the services of a collaborator.[9] I then made a cursory, rather than a thorough, reading of the whole text, and noted variant readings in the margins as well as conjectures of my own. Among these were many that needed the attention of a vigilant and learned scholar. Since it was not convenient for me to stay longer in Basel, I entrusted the whole project to a friend whose good faith I had no reason to doubt at the time,[10] nor do I want to complain of it now. But several months later, on my return to Basel, I found he had carried out the work in a manner that made me blush at its publication.

I do not propose to follow the common practice of shifting the blame to someone else; I prefer to divide the responsibility between the one who gave the commission and the one who took it on. It was my fault that I forgot the wise fable of the crested lark and depended on the help of a friend in a matter which could, and should, have been better done by myself;[11] and I blame him for taking upon his inexperienced shoulders a burden beyond his powers. Yet perhaps the greater share of blame belongs to me, since the man who places the packsaddle on the ox is a greater fool than the ox who receives it.[12] But if it is not possible to excuse the error for which both of us are responsible, it would, I think, be kinder at least to recognize the extenuating circumstances. I had evidence of my friend's good faith, but because of my friendship for him I had an exaggerated impression of his abilities,

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8 *Adagia* I vii 4. A popular adage in Erasmus' time, not classical; see K.F.W. Wander *Deutsches Sprichwörter-Lexikon* (Darmstadt 1960) IV 1221 no 50.

9 Robert Aldridge; see Epp 1656, 1766.

10 Wilhelm Nesen; see Ep 1341A:451–8.

11 The moral of the fable in question, one of Aesop's, is that one should not depend on others for what one can do oneself. See Babrius 88 and Aulus Gellius 2.29. It is quoted also in Ep 1341A:457–8 and in lines 625–6 below.

12 Cf *Adagia* II ix 84.

learning, and judgment; he, on the other hand, because he reciprocated my affection, wanted to please me and perhaps felt some embarrassment about refusing, and so he took on more than he could deliver. My mistake was the result of innocence and a warm regard, his of enthusiasm and deference. As for the loss of that part of the manuscript which had the most annotations, I prefer to believe that this was not his doing, or if it was, that he acted out of affection for me, preferring to forget his obligations rather than risk losing my friendship.[13]

But a second disaster followed on the first. (The whole project, you see, was cursed from the start.) I had arranged through a bookseller, who brought great success to himself but disaster to everyone else,[14] to have a copy of the Seneca delivered to the bishop to whom I had dedicated the work. On his return from England, the man swore that he had faithfully carried out my request. I believed him, for how could anyone not believe an assurance of that kind? Meanwhile, in my letters to the bishop, I made repeated references to the volume that I had dedicated and sent to him. Since he had received nothing, he thought I was making fun of him. A lawyer, who was his secretary, inflamed the bishop's resentment against me by drawing his attention to several passages containing such obvious errors that it is a wonder they were not spotted even by the printers. Finally, I returned to England,[15] totally unaware of these events,[16] and found the bishop, who had previously been most cordial, quite cool towards me. Eventually I discovered the explanation. So besides the embarrassment that the work caused me, I came close to losing a very good friend.

Meanwhile I continued to be pricked by feelings of shame. Just as soldiers after a defeat want to make up for the disgrace they have suffered by showing valour in the next engagement, so I wanted to repair the errors of the first edition by a more successful reworking. And yet the earlier edition, whatever its faults, did restore the text in a considerable number of places; it certainly gave scholars reason to hope that this scrubland could be cleared and made into useful tillage. So I have taken up Seneca

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13 Cf Ep 1479:99–102.

14 Franz Birckmann (Ep 258:14n), the Antwerp bookseller who was long involved not only in the distribution of Erasmus' works but also in the transfer of his pension from England. Erasmus had long since come to regard him as dishonest and had represented him as such in his colloquy *Pseudochei et Philetymi* 'The Liar and the Man of Honour' (CWE 39 344–50).

15 In July–August 1516

16 Ep 437 indicates that Erasmus had identified the problem and dealt with it before his visit to England in 1516.

again, this time, unless I am mistaken, with better prospects of success, and I have devoted so much care and effort to removing blemishes that I can now claim the right to disown the earlier edition. So to ensure that the same ill luck does not cling to this new edition, and that what is now a different work appears under a new star, I have thought it proper to change the preface and dedicate my labours to your most auspicious person. I hope that just as by your wise and faithful counsel you have proved a great blessing to King Sigismund, a man well versed in the arts of peace and war, and to the flourishing kingdom of Poland, whose most vigilant chancellor you are, so your name set at the head of this text of Seneca will be a happy omen to all lovers of learning, who, until now, have been put on the rack by this author; for while Seneca is eminently worth reading, he has fared so badly that there is hardly a passage where the reader can unravel the tangles.

I shall not dwell on the trouble this has caused me. I am sure no one would believe it unless he compared the earlier edition with the present one. Anyone who takes the time to do so will immediately agree that here we have a different Seneca, not because there are no problems remaining to be solved, but because numerous monstrosities have been removed from the text by bold and happy conjectures. In this I had the assistance of several manuscripts, some of considerable antiquity. I have not resorted recklessly to conjecture,[17] having learned from experience how unsafe that course is. In some places, however, conjecture was necessary, and unless I am totally deceived, the results have been happy in not a few instances. In this I have benefited greatly from the devoted labours of Matthaeus Fortunatus of Hungary, who, as the evidence shows, is a man of precise learning, great industry, and sound and sober judgment. He produced a meticulous edition of the *Naturales quaestiones*;[18] I only wish he had done the same for all the rest. In most cases I have been glad to follow him, though sometimes I disagree, especially where I have found support for my interpretation in the manuscripts. I have profited also from a copy of Seneca belonging to Rodolphus Agricola, which was printed fifty years ago at Treviso.[19] He appears to have worked through it very carefully, as is shown by the annotations in his own hand in which countless passages are corrected, although in many cases, it is clear, he was guided more by a natural bent for emendation than by the

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17 Cf Epp 325:45–54, 1479:93–8 and 107–8, 1482:37–40, 1544:130–3, 2103:11–14.
18 See Ep 1479 n43.
19 See Epp 2056:3–6, 2108:1–2.

authority of an old manuscript. In an incredible number of instances what we have is an inspired guess from an inspired scholar – I cannot sum up Rodolphus' great and many gifts more succinctly than that. His copy was made available to me by Haio Herman of Friesland,[20] a young man with such natural ability that he seems uniquely suited to assume the mantle of Rodolphus and keep alive the great man's name. He is, moreover, related to him by marriage and shares a common nationality. I must also mention Sigismundus Gelenius,[21] who has long been in charge of editing at the Froben press, a fine and unpretentious scholar, and one who has the gift, rare even among the learned, of keen discernment[22] and good judgment. He detected several errors that had escaped me, distracted as I was by a host of problems and suffering sometimes from exhaustion. It is not in my nature to rob any man of his due praise.

Seneca has come down to us in a monstrously corrupt form. Apart from the usual causes of corruption, that is, the ignorance and carelessness of copyists and the temerity of would-be scholars who change anything they cannot understand, there are two special factors in Seneca's case. The first is Seneca's style; for he is constantly striving for rhetorical cleverness, sometimes even to the point of producing a mystifying puzzle; and when this is combined with the hazards of a clipped and irregular style, it was all too easy for the half-educated and the inattentive to fall into disastrous error. On this subject I shall have more to say shortly. The second reason is that the early Christians, in an excess of zeal, claimed this writer for themselves and embraced him almost as though he were an orthodox believer, partly because of the high moral tone that they observed in his books, and partly through the influence of a small volume containing several letters exchanged between the apostle Paul and Seneca.[23] The claim to authorship is mistaken, but sometimes in human affairs some silly and worthless fiction assumes a surprising importance. For it is not just in war, as the proverb has it, that men have their illusions,[24] but in every aspect of this mortal life.

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20 Epp 1978, 2108
21 Ep 1702 n1
22 Literally 'of a nose well wiped'; *Adagia* II viii 59
23 The supposed correspondence between Seneca and Paul (eight letters from Seneca, six from Paul) is first mentioned by Jerome in *De viris illustribus* 12 (cf n25 below). The correspondence is a forgery, probably of the fourth century. For an English translation (along with the Latin original), see Ep 2092 n10.
24 *Adagia* II x 19

While it is true of all times that ordinary people are exceptionally gullible, in that age, when there was a general disposition towards religious belief and people were more credulous and less critical, it was correspondingly easier to deceive them under the mask of piety. Moreover, Seneca gained considerable support from the approval of St Jerome, who included him in his *Catalogue of Saintly Writers*,[25] although several other writers were included in that list whose claims to saintliness were not very well established: Josephus, for example, a professed Jew, and the heretics Tertullian, Novatianus, and Donatus. This religious zeal explains why it was that while pagan literature, sciences, languages, and history were scorned, the books of Seneca were read in private and expounded to the young in public by illiterate and half-educated teachers who had only a vague smattering of Seneca's naive and unsophisticated philosophy, certainly no thorough knowledge of it. These men would begin a course with an explication of the four causes: material, formal, efficient, and final; then, explaining that a particular letter dealt with moral philosophy, they would divide it into two principal parts, each of which would be further divided into three or four subsidiary parts. When, after this vaporous beginning,[26] they were fairly launched on their task, if they came upon a relatively rare word, or a figure of speech, or an allusion to an unfamiliar author, or a bit of Greek, or a reference to ancient history – anything, in short, that required some knowledge beyond the ordinary – since they were totally ignorant of such matters (and Seneca loves to include them, almost to the point of ostentation), they either had to invent downright nonsense or alter the text. But what else would you expect? For when you have ascended the chair, it would be shameful to keep silent,[27] and to profess ignorance does not become a man who has the distinction of the cap and the title of Master of Arts.

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25 *Catalogus sanctorum*. The work is better known as *De viris illustribus* 'On Illustrious Men.' It is also referred to as 'The Catalogue of Ecclesiastical Writers' and 'The Catalogue of Illustrious Authors' (Ep 325:78). Jerome did not in fact attribute sainthood to Seneca any more than he did to Josephus (or Philo, who is also included). His purpose in writing *De viris illustribus* was simply to provide short biographies of figures of importance in the history of the church. He justified the inclusion of Seneca solely on the basis of the supposed correspondence with Paul.

26 Literally 'after this smoke.' 'Smoke' was a proverbial expression for something that promises much but accomplishes little. See *Adagia* IV viii 83.

27 Ie it would be a shame to keep silent lest the ignorant mistake silence for lack of learning; see *Adagia* II vii 4.

You would hardly believe the extent of the disrespect for the text that I encountered here. I found the same passage corrupted in so many ways and so irresponsibly altered that not a single word agreed either with any other version perpetrated by these vandals or with the correct reading as I uncovered it in some very old manuscripts. When once a text has been corrupted, and someone tries to emend it in an equally reckless manner, and then some further novelties are introduced by a succession of scholars, the error is beyond correction, and no conjecture from anyone, however learned, can help. A mistake caused by the ignorance of the copyists leaves some traces of the genuine reading, allowing the discerning critic to guess at the truth. Similarly, when a mistake arises from scribal abbreviation or from the practice of dictation, where the same sound does not reach everyone's ears in the same way, some possibility remains of scholarly emendation. For it was a common practice among teachers to dictate a text which they proposed to discuss later.[28] But not everyone would be equally close to the teacher, different countries had different pronunciations, and the speech of the reader was not always clear. As a result *contantius* would be written for *constantius*, and *alea* for *area*. Similarly, the various forms of the contractions offered ample scope for error. Yet, thanks to the favour he enjoyed among Christians, while many distinguished writers have been lost, Seneca has for the greater part survived – that is, if this is what we mean by survival.

I believe I have advanced matters so far that if a scholar with more ability, learning, and leisure improves upon this edition as much as I have improved upon the earlier one, we shall have a Seneca who can be read with the minimum of anguish and the maximum of profit. I have added short notes,[29] few in number, and only where I thought it necessary to remove serious corruption; for there would have been no limit to the annotation if I had decided to do what Fortunatus did and write notes on every passage where an emendation is made. And yet I would dearly love to see this author illuminated by explanatory notes, which would shine like little stars,[30]

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28 Many surviving manuscripts had come into being as student texts dictated by a teacher.

29 There were none in the edition of 1515. Erasmus had prepared some, but they did not make it into the printed book, something that he blamed on his collaborators. See Ep 1341A:452–63; and see also Epp 305:232–4, 1479:101–2.

30 The Latin for 'like little stars' is *stellulis*. In textual criticism the word generally means 'asterisks,' but here it seems to be used metaphorically to refer to stars as a guide to mariners; see *Adagia* I v 57 and III v 42. In the second of these adages Erasmus explains that small stars give the sailor a more reliable bearing.

freeing the text from mindless distortion. A scholar who did not lack industry published a biography of Seneca, drawn from Suetonius, Cornelius Tacitus, and Jerome. His book is the basis for the 'Life' that we see appended here.[31]

I cannot agree with those who want to make Seneca a Christian,[32] like Nicodemus.[33] They have no plausible argument for this except the letters,[34] which, as I shall show later, were the fabrication of an enthusiastic admirer.[35] What this amounts to is no argument at all except that both lived in Rome under the same emperor. But let us suppose that Seneca, who wrote more frequently and more emphatically than anyone else about despising death, was so terrified that he never gave a hint of his conversion even in works produced in his extreme old age, and so cautious that no word of it reached Nero – and remember that when Nero had decided to remove Seneca from this world and was inventing fictitious reasons as an excuse for his actions, he never accused him of being a Christian. Even if we grant this, how shall we explain away that in his later writings Seneca often speaks of 'gods' and 'goddesses' and sometimes doubts whether anything of man survives after death?[36] Even if we admit that it is no sin for a man to pretend he is not a Christian because of the fear of death, it is surely an impious pretence to deny piety with impiety. It is one thing to hide Christ behind a pagan cloak, and quite another to publish books that run counter to the teachings of Christ. To keep silent about Christ is one thing, to use language that dishonours him is another.

What, then, is the point of this fabrication? Is it to commend Seneca's books to Christians? I think it is better for the reader to approach Seneca's works as if they were written by a man ignorant of our religion. For if you read him as a pagan, he wrote like a Christian; while if you read him as a

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31 The 'Life of Lucius Annaeus Seneca' is placed immediately after this letter in the 1529 Froben Seneca. The work on which it is based is attributed to 'an unknown author.'

32 The legend of Seneca's conversion to Christianity does not seem to have been current until the fourteenth century; see Arnoldo Momigliano 'Note sulla leggenda del cristianesimo di Seneca' *Rivista storica italiana* 62 (1950) 325–44.

33 Nicodemus, the 'man of the Pharisees . . . [and] a ruler of the Jews,' who 'came to Jesus by night,' and whose initial skepticism turned into open discipleship; John 3:1–15, 7:50, 19:39

34 See n23 above.

35 See Ep 2092.

36 For Seneca's ambivalent attitude towards survival after death see *Epistulae morales* 36.10–11, 65.24, 71.16; *Ad Marciam* 19.4–6; *Ad Polybium* 9.2.

Christian, he wrote like a pagan. There are many passages in Seneca that could kindle our flagging zeal in the practice of virtue, and these will have a sharper effect if we remember they came from a pagan. For some of the sayings and actions of the pagans, if judged by the standards of the philosophy of Christ, must be strongly condemned; yet they exhibit a remarkable disposition towards virtue. I could cite that remark of Socrates: 'The only thing I know is that I know nothing';[37] this is absurd in itself, yet it serves as a rebuke to our arrogance. And the action of Lucretia,[38] although rightfully abhorrent, commends the practice of chastity; and it does so all the more effectively because it comes from a pagan woman.

So as a moralist Seneca will be read with greater profit if he is read for what he was – a pagan. What he says in a Christian spirit will then affect us more strongly and the opposite will do us less harm. Besides, he is never further from the philosophy of Christ than when he deals with subjects that are central for us. The essential point of our faith is the knowledge of God. But when Seneca sets out to demonstrate the nature of God, he says, 'God is everything that one sees or does not see,'[39] as if the whole universe were a huge creature whose body is visible to our sight and whose soul is hidden, and this is God. On the question whether there is one god or several, he shilly-shallies dreadfully, while at the same time referring repeatedly to 'gods and goddesses.' Again, he pokes fun at those who think that nothing happens in the world of which this god takes any notice,[40] no more than an elephant takes notice of a fly.[41] When he discusses the question whether or not the soul survives the body, he gives the impression that it does not matter which view you take.[42] In one place, as Tertullian points out,[43] he affirms that everything is ended by death, even death itself. Finally, whenever he mentions the Stoics' 'wise man,' he frequently sets him on a level with the

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37 Plato *Apology* 21–2

38 Her suicide after being raped by Sextus Tarquinius

39 *Naturales quaestiones* 1 prol 13, 2.45.3. Not everyone has dismissed this statement so abruptly. It is possible that it suggested to Anselm of Canterbury his celebrated ontological argument for the existence of god; see F.S. Smith *Anselmus Cantuariensis*: *Opera* I (Edinburgh 1946) 102n; J.R. Weinberg *A Short History of Medieval Philosophy* (Princeton 1964) 66.

40 *De beneficiis* 4.4.1, 4.19. Seneca is attacking the Epicureans, who held that the gods take no interest in human affairs.

41 *Adagia* I x 66

42 See n36 above.

43 *De resurrectione mortuorum* 1; *De anima* 42. The passage in Seneca referred to is *Troades* 397.

gods, sometimes even above the gods.[44] He says that the wise man owes all his happiness to himself, that he has no need of the gods, in fact the gods owe something to him. But our faith has taught us that God cares even for the lilies and for the little sparrows,[45] that man has nothing good of himself but owes the whole sum of his happiness to divine grace. How dangerous it would be, therefore, if we read such works as though they came from a Christian pen! As for his value as a model of erudition and rhetorical eloquence, Quintilian warned us long ago that Seneca should be read selectively and with discrimination.[46] His criticism is so nicely balanced that he avoids praising, out of regard for the person, what ought to be condemned, and condemning, because of prejudice, what merits praise.

Perhaps it would not be out of place if, for the benefit of young students, I indicated briefly what to reject in this author and what to imitate. First, he has adopted an artificial language so as to avoid comparison with Cicero. This is something, however, which he shares with Quintilian and the Plinys and, I dare say, with the whole Silver Age that followed the Golden Age of Cicero. I shall provide a few instances that will enable the reader to work out the rest. His use of the reflexive pronoun, *sui, sibi, se*, is often puzzling. Nearly always, when he wants to cite an example, he uses *tamquam* 'as though' for *velut, sive, ut* 'as.' Several times he says *aeque quam* for *aeque atque*. He likes to add *cum* to superlatives, never, so far as I know, *quam*; thus *cum maxime* for *quam maxime* 'as much as possible.' He often employs *adversus* 'against' for *erga* 'towards' in a favourable sense, as in *gratus adversus deos* 'grateful to the gods.' In the idiom *non modo contemnit homines, sed deos negligit* 'not only does he despise men, but he neglects the gods' he hardly ever adds the conjunction, *sed et deos* or *sed deos quoque* 'but also the gods.' I do not criticize or condemn these or similar expressions; I simply point out that they have none of Cicero's naturalness.

Quintilian in his tenth book describes Seneca as a practised writer, since he had experience of every kind of composition.[47] He concedes that he has a quick and inventive mind, great energy, and wide knowledge. He acknowledges that his works abound in striking aphorisms, and he praises his outspokenness in denouncing vice, adding that his books are useful for the formation of character. In sum, he holds that there are many things in Seneca that deserve not just our approval, but our admiration. On the other

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44 *Epistulae morales* 31.8, 73.11–16, 92.30; *De brevitate vitae* 15.3–5
45 Matt 6:26, 28 and 10:29; Luke 12:27
46 10.1.131
47 10.1.125–31

hand, he denies him a technical understanding of philosophy and finds him lacking in self-criticism, a faculty which had been undermined in him by the all too human failing of self-love. This is a weakness sometimes found in good and learned men, but is amply made up for by their many virtues. Quintilian hints at this feature of Seneca's character when he says, 'If only he had not loved everything that was his own,' and then adds: 'One could wish that, while making use of his own good qualities, he had been guided by the judgment of others.' This self-love seems to have made Seneca less than fair in his criticisms of the work of others. Quintilian suggests as much when he writes, 'I was not trying to banish him altogether, but I refused to let him be preferred to better writers, whom he never ceased to attack; for being conscious that his own style differed from theirs, he was afraid that anyone who found them attractive could never like him.'[48] As for his style, Quintilian thinks that there is much in it that is decadent, and the effect is all the more insidious 'because so many of his vices are attractive.' He criticizes him in particular for weakening his weighty subject matter by chopping it up into short epigrammatic phrases; and in another passage, if I am not mistaken, he censures his clipped and fractured style.[49]

Suetonius too seems to have found him wanting in integrity.[50] In his *Life of Claudius Nero* he writes as follows: 'As a boy he [Nero] took up almost all the liberal disciplines; but his mother turned him away from philosophy, warning him that it was injurious to one who was destined to rule, and his teacher Seneca discouraged any acquaintance with the ancient orators so as to prolong his admiration of himself.'[51] The same author in his *Life of Caligula* seems to attribute to Seneca a polished and unemotional style;[52] he says of the emperor: 'He was so strongly opposed to a polished and unemotional style that he used to say of Seneca, who was then at the height of his popularity, that he produced "mere school exercises – all sand and no lime."'[53] Since Seneca is forceful in conveying tragic emotions, I wonder why Suetonius thought him unemotional – and I say nothing about the polish of his style.

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48 10.1.126
49 Erasmus is mistaken. These were the criticisms made of Sallust, not Seneca, in 4.2.45.
50 The Latin word *candor* can mean both moral integrity and verbal clarity. Here the moral sense suits the context better. But the reference could be to a lack of 'lucidity' in Seneca's clipped style.
51 *Nero* 52
52 *Gaius Caligula* 53
53 On 'all sand and no lime,' see *Adagia* II iii 57.

Aulus Gellius, in the second chapter of book 12 of the *Attic Nights*, is even more vehement in his attacks upon Seneca. He begins by reporting the judgment of other readers: some thought his books not worth the trouble 'because his style is trite and commonplace, his matter and his ideas manifest either a silly and inappropriate ardour or a superficial and sardonic cleverness, his erudition is mean and ordinary, and he has nothing of the grace or dignity of the classical writers'; other readers were slightly more favourable: while denying him much in the way of elegance of style, they allowed him breadth of knowledge and approved 'the serious, impressive, and not unattractive way in which he castigates moral failings.' Specifically, Gellius lashes out against Seneca's verdict on Cicero, becoming so heated that he calls him 'a nonentity.' Then he adds, 'I am already growing weary of Seneca's words; nonetheless, I shall not omit some amusing remarks of this dull, silly, and unattractive fellow.' And he ends his criticism with this: 'Seneca would seem to be worth reading and studying by the young.'[54] Among these strictures (which he intends to outnumber the favourable comments), to show that there are qualities in Seneca that can be admired, he cites a single sentence: 'What does it matter how much you have? There is much more that you do not have!'[55] Unfortunately, this sounds more like a remark of Publius,[56] the writer of mimes, than of Seneca, since it is in the form of a trochaic tetrameter catalectic! Gellius' criticism has something to it, but not all of his points are persuasive.

Cornelius Tacitus is more charitable.[57] Like all other historians, he praises Seneca for his integrity and unflinching courage,[58] and he credits him with elegance of style.[59] He thought his style more suited to delectation than serious discussion, but excuses this on the ground that Seneca, as a realist, recognized that the wild character of his young charge could not be brought to a love of virtue by the precepts of philosophy, and so at-

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54 Cited from *Attic Nights* 12.2.11, with slight differences from Gellius' text

55 Seneca *Epistulae morales* 2.541

56 The name was Publilius Syrus, not 'Publius.' The confusion goes back to the manuscripts of our ancient sources. Publilius lived in the first century BC and wrote mimes that are now lost. But many of his aphorisms circulated separately in antiquity. His metres were free iambics and trochaics.

57 *Annales* 13.2.2

58 The reference is to the passage describing the philosopher's death, *Annales* 15.63.

59 *Annales* 13.3.2

tempted to soften or control his character by a more agreeable and attractive approach. As a result of this training, Nero excelled at composing songs and commended himself to his hearers with speeches written by Seneca.[60]

Among the many fine qualities that Quintilian acknowledges in the writings of Seneca, none is more important than his remarkable ability to inspire the reader with a love of virtue and to turn him away from petty preoccupations and sordid pleasures.[61] Since this is the highest good, does it matter, then, what style one uses to accomplish it? Seneca's style is fine enough, however, to have won him a place among the principal figures of a most learned age. So what right have we to scorn him today?

Yet what those learned writers said about him has some truth in it. He was less than fair in criticizing the achievements of others. Often he makes fun of the 'poor Greeks,' sometimes quite gratuitously; and as a rule he never quotes from excellent writers without trying to disparage them, as if it were a disgrace to approve wholeheartedly of anyone. Time and time again he passes judgment on the talents and eloquence of others, as he does particularly in the *Declamations*.[62] Often he attacked writers with exceptional rudeness, criticizing them for the silliness or absurdity or stupidity of their epigrams and in many cases ridiculing them with a sarcastic wit unworthy of a serious person. All this gives an impression of a mind intolerant of the praise of others and too generous in praise of itself. Such arrogance, it must be admitted, is a common fault with the learned: hardly anyone is so perfect that he satisfies his critics on every point – until the passage of time takes away our readiness to criticize and inspires all alike with a kind of reverence.

Several times he makes unfriendly references to Ovid, alleging that he was too self-indulgent and preferred to love his faults rather than correct them.[63] This judgment, it seems, appealed to Quintilian, who thinks that we can see from the *Medea* how much Ovid might have accomplished, had he chosen to control his natural inclinations rather than indulge them.[64] But Seneca is much more self-indulgent than Ovid, and he shows this in prose and in serious subjects, while Ovid wrote poems, mostly of a light nature. Sometimes Seneca finds Ovid wanting in the seriousness that the

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60 *Annales* 13.3.2, 13.11.2, 14.11.4
61 Quintilian 10.1.128
62 Ie the *Suasoriae* and *Controversiae* of the elder Seneca
63 This is from the elder Seneca *Controversiae* 2.2.12.
64 Quintilian 10.1.98. Ovid's only play, the *Medea*, is lost.

subject demands, as in his account of Deucalion's flood.[65] Or he is bothered by Ovid's flow of words, alleging that he does not know when to stop. Again, he faults him for borrowing a phrase from Porcius Latro.[66] Does he think Ovid incapable of inventing an equivalent for himself? Or could the same idea not have occurred independently to both men? At times he does not spare even Virgil[67] or Cicero.[68] It is true that this sort of criticism can be helpful in literary studies, but it must be done fairly and without rancour.

Even that particular virtue for which Seneca is especially praised is tainted. He attacks people's morals freely and wittily, but his attacks are sometimes misplaced or excessive, and occasionally rather strained and artificial. As a consequence, the effect does not differ much from malicious gossip. In his attacks on certain vices, he describes them in such a way that you would think he envies rather than hates them, that he is encouraging rather than abhorring them. Some vices, in fact, are of such a kind that simply to describe them is to advocate and encourage them. A good example is the highly improper excursus on the use of mirrors in the first book of the *Naturales quaestiones*.[69] Again, in the *Declamations*, although he addresses this work to his sons, Seneca, Mela, and Novatus,[70] he uses expressions that a modest man would hardly dare to use, much less a father to his children, even if prefaced with an apologetic 'saving your presence.'[71] If you are not concerned about decency, his witty tirade against public morals is enjoyable enough, though hardly polite.[72] Nothing is easier than to be eloquent on such a subject. This explains why even today we have preachers who are tongue-tied if they are required to speak on a sacred theme, but when this subject comes up, find their tongues again.

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65 *Naturales quaestiones* 3.27.13–15. Ovid's account of the flood is in *Metamorphoses* 1.253–312.

66 Again the references are to the elder Seneca: *Controversiae* 9.5.17 (Ovid did not know when to leave well enough alone), 2.2.8 (he borrowed from Porcius Latro).

67 *Epistulae morales* 108; cf Gellius 12.2.10.

68 Gellius 12.2.2–9

69 1.16

70 Erasmus is again writing of Seneca the Elder as though he were the same person as Seneca the Younger. The elder Seneca's other two sons were Annaeus Novatus (later, by adoption, L. Junius Gallio) and M. Annaeus Mela (the father of the poet Lucan).

71 In Latin *honor auribus* 'honour to your ears.' The elder Seneca uses this phrase at *Controversiae* 1.2.4 to preface a discussion of prostitution.

72 *Controversiae* 1 pref 7–10

Throughout Seneca's work one is aware of a constant straining after the facetious remark, even in a serious context where I would wish he had steered clear of anything inappropriate or obscene and avoided the faults of rudeness and scurrility. There is a kind of humour that is entirely proper and a certain general lightness of tone that is not unbecoming in the style of a good man, if used in the right place. But in Seneca what one hears is not a laugh, but a guffaw. Quintilian's complaint about his persistent fondness for epigram is not at all off the point.[73] This attempt of his to say everything epigrammatically has certain consequences: it is true that many of Seneca's epigrams could not be bettered, but these stand side by side with others that are painful, contrived, and silly. The same applies to his fondness for rhetorical flourishes[74] and clever turns of phrase. These in Seneca frequently depend on words rather than situations, and so tend inevitably towards artificiality and obscurity. As an example, take the following from the beginning of the first letter to Lucilius: 'Some moments are stolen from us, some quietly removed, some just float away'; and a little later: 'for much of life we act badly, for most of it we do not act at all, for all of it we act unthinkingly.'[75] I shall say something about this in its proper place.

Seneca also goes astray in his use of emotional effects. Other writers lay the ground for these during the expository sections of their work and introduce them at the right moment. Learned critics do not approve the practice of playing constantly on the emotions; in fact some even reject the emotions altogether as tending to cloud the judgment. But Seneca at every point, even at the very beginning of a work, does not so much stir the emotions as wring them from us, particularly those tragic emotions that the Greeks call $\pi\acute{\alpha}\theta\eta$.[76] So when he has to deal with an imposing subject, as, for example, when writing about the universe, the nature of the gods, the Stoic sage, earthquakes, lightning, floods, the end of the world, contempt for death, suicide, it is as though he has been given his head[77] and is now free to demonstrate his command of the grand style and breathe the tragic spirit.

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73 Quintilian 10.1.130

74 The Latin is *epiphonemata*, a rhetorical term defined by Quintilian (8.5.11) as a 'flourish attached to the end of a statement or a proof.'

75 *Epistulae morales* 1.1. Erasmus' text is: *magna vitae pars elabitur male agentibus, maxima nihil agentibus, tota aliud agentibus*. Modern editors, following better manuscripts, interchange *magna* and *maxima*, giving the meaning 'for most of life we act badly, for much of it we do not act . . .'

76 *pathe*: see Quintilian 6.2.8–24.

77 Literally 'having obtained his field'; cf Quintilian 4.2.39.

It is likely that many of these faults have stuck to him from his association with the schools of rhetoric, for he spent almost all his life there.[78] Quintilian himself admits that this kind of rhetorical training, helpful though it was in bringing eloquence to a state of perfection, was also in some way responsible for many corrupt practices.[79] What counted in the schools was the applause of the audience, so everyone aimed, not for what was best, but for what was most appealing. An idle and hypercritical audience was niggardly with its applause unless it was given aphorisms, smart sayings, figures of speech, dramatic climaxes, and other novel or fantastic turns of phrase. Simple language, even when it was most effective, was scorned. Often the worst speech got the loudest applause. And so there was a retreat from that direct and natural manner of speaking which is thought to be superior to all others, perhaps because it bears the stamp of sincerity. What, after all, is a polished speech that fails to carry conviction except a sort of musical incantation? This is why Quintilian complains about speakers who brought the faults they had picked up in the schools into the courts and to important cases, with grave danger to the defendants, since defending counsel prefers to lose a case rather than miss the opportunity for a joke or a figure and is sometimes encouraged by the laughter of the jury and the crowd.[80] You will find faults of this kind in Seneca's books – as in the cases I mentioned earlier, and in those patent fictions that he likes so much: 'I see what you wish'; 'From now on I shall watch the expression on your face';[81] 'Although Novatus has knit his brows.'[82] Occasionally he introduces a new speaker or changes speakers without warning the reader, which is another reason for the obscurity of his work. Sometimes you cannot tell whether the speaker is the author himself, or his adversary in the debate, or a third person. Not that these tricks are absent from other writers, but they are rarer, less harsh, and less confusing. He is much given to the use of dialogue, in which he puts words of his own in the mouths of various characters. This makes the discussion fuller, more entertaining and exciting. It is not that he does this badly, but he does it too often and in too rhetorical a style, that is, he aims more at pleasing the reader than advancing the serious business at hand.

One might dismiss the judgment of the emperor Caligula as coming from a man of unsound mind,[83] who had tried to remove the busts of Virgil

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78 Again a reference to the elder Seneca
79 Quintilian 2.10.1–8, 10.5.14–20, 12.6.5, 12.11.15–16
80 Quintilian 4.3.2
81 *De beneficiis* 6.1.1
82 Cf *Controversiae* 10 pref 9, where it is Mela, not Novatus, who knits his brows.
83 For Caligula's verdict on Seneca see Suetonius *Gaius Caligula* 53.2.

and Titus Livius from the libraries.[84] But we meet the same criticism in Quintilian,[85] and the facts almost speak for themselves. Generally, one misses in Seneca a sense of order and structure. Whatever subject one tackles has a beginning, middle, and end. We begin as a rule by defining what the subject is; it is then broken down under various heads, and these are arranged in order. Each of these is treated according to an established sequence: first, those that come closest to the essence of the question, then those that are logically related to it, then points that are similar or contrary, followed by consequences, advantages, and disadvantages, and finally the methods by which these can be secured, maintained, or augmented, or conversely, how they can be avoided, eliminated, or minimized. In this way the whole work resembles the human body, with all its members joined in their proper order. This is what we admire in Aristotle and miss in Seneca; for he does not always define the issue and set out its various heads, and whenever he does so, he fails to stick to his plan but wanders off at the first opportunity, often beginning again *de novo*. He rarely makes use of transitional formulae that make for clarity of exposition. Sometimes he postpones the division of a subject into its parts until near the end of the work. Occasionally he forgets himself and repeats what has already been said. This shows either that he developed this fault from the training of the schools or, what is nearer the truth, that he began to write without previous consideration and was guided more by impulse than by any rational plan. His writing does not proceed at a steady pace, but rushes headlong, moving by leaps and bounds rather than by measured steps – at least so far as the argument is concerned.

As for the arrangement of words, he is very sparing in the use of conjunctions, which are, so to speak, the sinews of language. He is fond of asyndeton,[86] which sometimes adds force to his language or, to be more precise, a certain stylishness. But not infrequently his sentence structure is so loose that you can hardly tell to what a particular phrase refers, whether to what precedes or to what follows.

He has the somewhat irritating habit of trying to find a new way of expressing the same thing. Take, for example, that saying of Plato's, ἕκαστος ἡμῶν οὐκ αὐτῷ μόνον γέγονεν, which Cicero translated elegantly as *Nemo nostrum sibi tantum nascitur* 'None of us is born for himself

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84 Ibidem 34.2

85 Quintilian 10.1.129

86 Asyndeton is the deliberate omission of a conjunction between the parts of a sentence. On the effects this procedure, see Quintilian 9.3.50–4 and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 4.30.

alone.'[87] Rather than say something similar, Seneca preferred to adopt a much inferior translation: *Nemo sibi contigit* 'No one happened for himself.'[88] To be frank, I would never have understood these words had I not guessed from the context that he intended to reproduce Plato's phrase. Certainly anyone who can express the same idea in different words deserves praise for his command of language. But what merit is there in saying something badly in order to say it differently? And what are we to say of the censorious writer who frequently commits the very faults he condemns in others? He attacks someone for using low words like *spongia* 'sponge,' *laterna* 'lantern,' *pulegium* 'pennyroyal,' and *acetum* 'vinegar,'[89] and sarcastically lectures someone else for asking in the middle of a declamation why it is that if a pot falls, it breaks, but if a sponge falls, it does not break,[90] while he himself fills one of his letters with many humbler expressions, describing in the special lingo of the subject the whole equipment and working of the public baths.[91] Why is it worse to call a pot a pot or a sponge a sponge if the occasion calls for it, than to call a fig a fig or a bean a bean?[92]

Seneca likes to poke fun at sophistic cleverness and at the subtle but unimportant questions that philosophers raise. Often he wastes the reader's time with silliness of this sort, and in the process confirms the truth of Quintilian's criticism that he is not well grounded in philosophy. It takes an expert to produce a neat burlesque of the ingenious inventions of the sophists, which Socrates mocks in a most amusing way. But what is the point of filling page after page with niggling questions of the sort that Chrysippus asked:[93] 'Can the wise man help another wise man?' 'Could the wise man be given a benefit by the gods?' 'Are the virtues living things?' 'Are separate virtues separate living things?' 'Are all the virtues a single entity?' 'Is saving one's father a living thing?'[94] He hammers away at nonsense like this until the reader is bored stiff. From time to time, however, we find him condemning

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87 *De officiis* 1.22, translating Plato *Ninth Letter* (to Archytas) 358A; see *Adagia* IV vi 81.

88 *Epistulae morales* 32.4. Modern editors do not follow Erasmus in seeing the Senecan phrase as a translation of Plato.

89 These words are criticized by the elder Seneca in *Controversiae* 7 pref 8.

90 The elder Seneca *Controversiae* 7 pref 8

91 Seneca *Epistulae morales* 56

92 *Adagia* II iii 5

93 Third-century philosopher and head of the Stoic school, famed for the subtlety of his argument

94 For niggling questions about the wise man see *Epistulae morales* 109; for those about the virtues ibidem 113.

it. What need is there to do something simply in order to denounce what one has done? As for his occasional false references, Quintilian excuses these by saying that he was let down by those to whom it was his custom to entrust the checking of such matters.[95] Scholars have criticized several instances of this sort. In one place he quotes a line 'from Ovid' that is really in Tibullus.[96]

I have mentioned these things not to dampen the reader's interest, but so that an author who is commended by so many excellencies may be read with greater profit. Let me add that sometimes I detect in him, as I have said, a certain rhetorical artificiality, and there are times when you long for something simple and natural. When Nero's mother wanted to arouse her son's jealousy, she put it about that the empire had been handed over to Burrus and Seneca, and she called Burrus 'a pipsqueak with a crippled hand' and Seneca 'an exile with a declaimer's tongue.'[97]

It is taken as evidence of a creative and versatile mind that Seneca employed his pen on widely different genres with almost equal success, something that neither Cicero nor Virgil managed to do. Tacitus mentions his 'poems,' though it is unclear what he thought of them.[98] Some scholars prefer to ascribe the tragedies to his son rather than to him; others assign them to Seneca's brother.[99] Several lines are quoted by Seneca from the first tragedy: 'Lead me, Father and Lord of the lofty heavens' etc.[100] It is my opinion that the tragedies are not all the work of the same man. Certainly one may deduce from the amusing little book 'On the death of Claudius'[101] that he had tackled this genre also without incurring the displeasure of Apollo and the Muses.[102] Quintilian believes that what prevented him from excelling in any single genre was his involvement with all of them, for I suspect this is what

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95 10.1.128

96 Tibullus 1.7.26 is falsely ascribed to Ovid in *Naturales quaestiones* 4.2.2.

97 Tacitus *Annales* 13.14.5

98 *Annales* 14.52.3

99 The writing here is rather careless. Erasmus is stating that some ascribe the plays not to his composite Seneca (see introduction), but to his son of the same name or to one of the latter's brothers. It is now generally agreed that Seneca the Younger wrote all the plays with the exception of *Octavia* and *Hercules Oetaeus*.

100 The lines are cited in *Epistulae morales* 107.11, where they are translated from the Stoic philosopher Cleanthes. There is an interesting puzzle here. By 'the first tragedy' Erasmus means *Hercules Furens*, but the lines are nowhere to be found in that play. How they came to be associated with *Hercules Furens* is unclear.

101 This is the satire better known as *Apocolocyntosis*.

102 See *Adagia* I i 72; cf Martial 2.89.3.

he means by the statement 'If he had been less ambitious . . .'[103] Certainly Tacitus declares that he aroused jealousy because, by occupying every field, he seemed to leave no room for the recognition of the merits of others.[104]

Tacitus also mentions speeches of Seneca. These are now lost, unless he is referring to the speeches of consolation that Seneca wrote, one to Marcia, another to Polybius (the first part of which is missing), and the third to his mother 'Albina,' (or 'Elbia,' as her name is spelled in some manuscripts).[105] But these seem more like literary works than speeches. Tacitus mentions speeches commonly attributed to Nero, but composed by Seneca.[106] I do not think, however, that Tacitus intended to count these among Seneca's works. I have included in this edition a speech recorded by Tacitus.[107] It is quite short, but elegantly written, and it certainly resembles Seneca in style. I wish we had those he dictated when he was dying![108] We know they circulated during Tacitus' lifetime.

There is a reference in Tacitus to 'dialogues,' which are also mentioned by Quintilian.[109] None of these is extant except a single short piece, to which some people have given the title *Sensus et Ratio*.[110] I am not sure it is Seneca's. Certainly it has come down to us in a mutilated and patched-up version. St Jerome in *Against Jovinianus* cites a work of Seneca 'On marriage.'[111] He

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103 Quintilian 10.1.130

104 Tacitus *Annales* 14.54.1–2

105 The name of the younger Seneca's mother was Helvia.

106 Tacitus *Annales* 13.11.2

107 *Annales* 14.53–6; in this speech Seneca defends his conduct before Nero and asks permission to retire.

108 Tacitus *Annales* 15.63.7; Tacitus records that Seneca, after opening his veins, summoned his scribes and dictated some final thoughts, which were later published.

109 Quintilian 10.1.129 mentions 'dialogues,' but Tacitus nowhere does so. Seneca the Younger wrote a series of moral essays that are often referred to as 'dialogues' because the twelve of them that were included in the Codex Ambrosianus were so designated even though they are not in dialogue form. Erasmus knew the works in question, but not by that name and thus did not understand Quintilian to be referring to them. In his table of contents Erasmus lists the moral essays separately under their individual titles: *De ira, De providentia*, etc.

110 This is an early, spurious dialogue entitled *De remediis fortuitorum*, which appears in a fourteenth-century catalogue under the title *De sensu et ratione*; see G.G. Meersseman 'Seneca maestro di spiritualità' *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 16 (1973) 49–50.

111 Jerome *Adversus Iovinianum* 1.49. The work is now lost, though some fragments survive. See E. Bickel *Diatribe in Senecae philosophi fragmenta* I (Leipzig 1915) 288.

himself in *Naturales quaestiones* informs us that as a young man he wrote a book on 'earthquakes.'[112] He also published a work 'on the superstitious rites of those who worship the gods.'[113] Augustine quotes extensively from it in the fifth chapter of book 6 of the *City of God*.[114]

Tacitus and Quintilian mention letters written in imitation of Plato,[115] but all addressed to the same person, namely Lucilius Balbus, procurator of Sicily.[116] Seneca seems to have chosen this genre to give full rein to his fancy, for no other genre offers the same scope. Anything you hear or read or anything that appears to you in a dream is matter for a letter. Moreover, you can begin, and end, and change direction wherever you wish. But one misses in Seneca the quality that lends other letters their greatest charm, that is, that they are a true reflection of a real situation. After all, I too could compose a whole letter on a single proverb. I am not sure that the work, as we have it, is complete. At all events, an extended passage of Seneca's that Gellius quotes from 'the twenty-second book of the *Letters*' is nowhere to be found in his writings.[117] In this work,[118] however, there is a letter beginning 'Quare quibusdam temporibus,' in which Seneca takes certain writers to task for bad taste and faults of style.[119] My guess is that a supporter of Cicero's removed from this letter the passage attacking Cicero's abilities as a writer.[120]

Of all the works that Seneca has left us, there is none, in my opinion, that the scholarly world would be more anxious to have complete than the

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112 6.4.2
113 *De superstitione* is also lost.
114 Actually 6.10
115 Quintilian mentions the letters at 10.1.129 but does not cite Plato as the model. No such reference is found in Tacitus.
116 Lucilius' cognomen was Iunior, not Balbus. 'Balbus' is due to confusion with the Stoic Q. Lucilius Balbus, one of the interlocutors in Cicero's *De natura deorum*.
117 Gellius 12.2.3–5 preserves a passage from 'book 22' of Seneca's letters, in which Cicero is criticized for defending some poor verses by Ennius; cf Cicero *Brutus* 57–9, quoting Ennius *Annales* (Skutsch 306–8).
118 Erasmus appears to mean 'in this edition of Seneca.'
119 In modern editions, this is Letter 114, on 'style as the mirror of morals.' Erasmus numbers it 115.
120 Modern editors know of only twenty extant books of Seneca's letters and assume, on the evidence of Aulus Gellius (n117 above), that other books have been lost; see L.D. Reynolds *The Medieval Tradition of Seneca's Letters* (Oxford 1965) 17. Erasmus, however, accommodated the reference in Gellius by organizing the letters into twenty-two books, assigning Letter 114 (which he numbered 115) to book 20. Here he conjectures that the letter in question had once contained the passage cited in Gellius.

Declamations, which filled many books, as we know from the surviving Epitome.[121] For it would have had the greatest value both for the handling of a subject and the formation of a critical judgment. I shall say something about this in its proper place.[122]

It has been my aim, most honoured bishop, to bring Seneca before the public under the happy auspices of your name; to that end I have devoted myself to this project energetically and, I think, not without success. Certainly, I have taken more pains with it than I could have been persuaded to take by any financial reward, even when I was a young man. Ovid was not wrong when he said: 'Fame is a mighty spur';[123] but I have learned from experience that shame is an even sharper spur. I have also been encouraged in my task by my concern for that excellent young man, Andrzej Zebrzydowski,[124] who does honour to his family and to you his uncle, for I realized how valuable this work would be for his studies, both to guide him towards a virtuous life and to help him develop a competent style. Now that I have learned my lesson through unhappy experience, I shall pay more attention to the wise advice of the crested lark, and not wait for friends to do what I could do better myself;[125] and I shall not forget the old proverb that forbids me to place the packsaddle on the ox.[126] If you think that with this present edition I have succeeded in wiping away the disgrace of the earlier, I shall not repent of my labours, weary though they have been.

Seneca will gain considerably in honour and respect among serious students if he wins a favourable verdict from you and thus has the support of a most learned and honest bishop; for in these troubled times you have proved an outstanding chancellor to the whole kingdom of Poland and to Sigismund, its illustrious king; and you have been an incorruptible bishop of the church and a most generous patron of the liberal arts, of which you are yourself an accomplished practitioner. I pray to Christ, our Lord and king, that he may be pleased to bless your glorious endeavours. For my mind is deeply troubled by this deadly scourge that, in almost every part of the

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121 Only five of the ten books of the *Controversiae* of the elder Seneca have survived complete. The gap is partly filled by an abridgement from the fourth or fifth century. See L.A. Sussman *The Elder Seneca* (Leiden 1978) 34–5.

122 The reference is to an explanatory note found on page 486 of the 1529 edition (not page 485 as indicated by Allen).

123 *Ex Ponto* 4.2.36

124 Epp 1826, 1958 n1

125 See n11 above.

126 See n12 above.

world, has destroyed peaceful relations among the princes, hurt the religion of Christ's people, and harmed all honourable disciplines. Sometimes the effect on me is almost to make me loathe those studies which are otherwise the sweetest things in life. But first through the mercy of God, and then by your vigilance and the vigilance of men like you, I hope that after this age, which is worse than the age of iron, there may come, if not a golden age, at least an age somewhat happier than the present.

Basel, in the month of January 1529

2092 / To the Reader [Basel, c February 1529]

This is a preface, added in the Seneca edition of 1529 (Ep 2091), to the letters between Seneca and St Paul, which modern scholars agree with Erasmus in regarding as spurious (Ep 2091:141–9, 212–30). The letters had been included in the first edition of 1515, but without any preface.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE READER, GREETING

I cannot imagine anything more lifeless or silly than these letters, and yet the author, whoever he was, set out to persuade us that Seneca was a Christian. St Jerome, who was not unaware of the deception, nevertheless took advantage of the credulity of simple people in order to commend Seneca's works as eminently suitable reading for a Christian.[1] But as I pointed out earlier in my preface, Seneca's writings would be more profitable if read as the work of a pagan.[2] Although these letters are composed as a private communication between the two men, there is absolutely nothing in those from Paul that truly reflects the Pauline spirit. You will hardly ever hear the name of Christ mentioned, although Paul's constant theme is Jesus Christ and him alone.[3] Then, what a timid portrait of Paul we have in these letters, Paul the courageous champion of the gospel! He scolds Seneca for showing Nero his epistles,[4] which he had written expressly to be read in all the churches; the Apostle even blames himself for his practice of appending his name to his letters![5] To back this up, I suppose, he advises us to be pleasing to all

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2092

1 Ep 2091 nn23, 25
2 Ep 2091:232–40
3 Cf 1 Cor 1:23.
4 Letter 8
5 Erasmus' recollection is not quite accurate. In Letter 6 Paul expresses his fears about putting anything on paper and follows this with the Pauline doctrine

men and obey our master, presumably Caesar.[6] But would Paul please anyone by concealing the gospel, when long before this he had sent the Romans a frank and lengthy letter? Was it Paul's message that the Christian faith should be kept secret to please a godless master? Then Seneca tells Paul that Caesar was inflicting cruel and savage punishments on the Christians – as if that would be news to anyone at Rome. Moreover, if the two men were afraid, they could have communicated more safely by mouth than by letter. Nor would Paul, with his love of the gospel, have been reluctant to go even 'to the Gardens of Sallust,'[7] if Seneca was afraid to come to Rome.

Think of the eloquence and passion with which Paul writes to a certain Philemon on a commonplace matter.[8] Are we to believe, then, that, in writing to a famous man like Seneca on what is the most important subject of all – the acceptance of the Christian faith – he would have employed such a feeble and anaemic style? And when he said, 'if Destiny grant us this favour,'[9] was he afraid to mention the name of God, whom the pagan Seneca mentions so frequently in his writings? Consider the utter fatuity of Seneca's sending Paul a book 'on expanding one's vocabulary'[10] to help him write better Latin. If Paul did not know Latin, he could have written in Greek, since Seneca knew Greek. How can we reconcile Seneca's view that the language of the philosopher should be weighted with ideas, not tricked out with words, with his demand that Paul possess a fluent command of the Latin language?

And now we come to the most impudent point of all: although the author makes Seneca complain that Paul lacks richness and elegance of

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that we should be accommodating to all men. In Letter 10 he apologizes for putting his name on his letters ahead of Seneca's in the opening greeting, 'Paul to Seneca, greeting.'

6 For Paul's views on pleasing all men see eg Col 1:10; and, for obedience to constituted authority, see Rom 13:1–5.

7 These famous Roman gardens were built by the historian Sallust and his adopted son. Later they passed into the hands of the imperial family. In the first of these letters Seneca says that he met some of Paul's disciples in the Sallustian Gardens, but Paul himself was not there.

8 In this epistle Paul urges his friend Philemon to forgive Onesimus, his runaway slave and a thief.

9 The words are used by Seneca in Letter 3.2, not by Paul.

10 The Latin title is *De copia verborum*. There is a pseudo-Senecan work of that name, but it is a medieval compilation that the ancient forger could not have known; see *Epistulae Senecae ad Paulum et Pauli ad Senecam* ed and trans Claude W. Barlow, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome 10 (1938) 208–9.

expression, in these letters he himself writes no better than Paul; in fact both stammer in the same way with the same silliness and poverty of thought. The author should at least have made some effort to copy Seneca's style and to borrow from Paul's epistles something of the intensity and sublimity of their language. To make Seneca speak like that is buffoonish impudence; to do the same to Paul is blasphemy. I have no doubt that Seneca's groom or muleteer would have written less ineptly. As for Paul, no one is less feeble or boring than he. In spite of all this we have today long-winded commentaries on these letters.[11] Can you imagine the awful blindness that produces a judgment like that? I would not mention this except that Christians are too open to such impostures in other cases as well.

Now let us consider the remarkable argument that led Jerome to list Seneca in his catalogue of saints (in which, however, he includes Jews and heretics who had left the fellowship of the church).[12] In the third letter from the end, Seneca writes 'I would like to enjoy among my people the position you hold among yours.'[13] Jerome attributes this remark to Seneca's modesty,[14] but Paul was held in the highest esteem among Christians, as the apostle who laboured more than all the rest.[15] Did Seneca wish for such a place among his people, that is, among the pagans? The inventor of this fiction is perhaps referring to the story in Tacitus that Seneca, troubled by envy and criminal charges from many quarters, pleaded with Nero to let him return the wealth and honours to the one who had given them to him.[16] But what does it matter whether he is ranked high or low, if he is ranked among idolaters? It would have been better if he had asked permission to be numbered among the humble disciples of Paul. Such a prayer would have commended him to Christian hearts.

Finally, if the picture painted in these letters is true,[17] was there ever a Christian who was the instrument of his own punishment? Has any Christian

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11 Allen lists one, conjecturally attributed to Nicholas Trivet (d 1328), the manuscript of which is in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, and reports that it is sufficiently 'verbose' to be eight times as long as the text.

12 Jerome *De viris illustribus* 12. Cf Ep 2091:153–8.

13 Actually the fourth from the end, Letter 11.5

14 Erasmus interpreted this comment of Jerome's as implying 'modesty': ie Seneca would like to have as *lowly* a position at Rome as Paul had among his people.

15 1 Cor 15:10; 2 Cor 11:23, 12:11

16 *Annales* 14.53–4

17 That is, if the view that Seneca was a Christian is correct. The letters themselves do not refer to Seneca's eventual suicide.

approved his wife's suicide when there was no necessity for it?[18] But when Seneca was carried into a hot bath and his strength was already ebbing, he sprinkled a little water mixed with blood and, recalling a remark of Socrates, said, 'I pour out this libation to Jupiter the Liberator,' meaning (we are told) 'to God.'[19] So not even at the point of death did he have the courage to mention the name of Christ.

But this is more than enough on a subject of no consequence.

2093 / To Karel Uutenhove Basel, 1 February 1529

This is the preface to *Aliquot opuscula divi Chrysostomi Graeca, lectu dignissima, cum praefatione Erasmi Roterodami, cuius studio sunt aedita* (Basel: Froben 1529), a miscellaneous collection of ten letters, homilies, and other short pieces in Greek, with no Latin translation. Cf Ep 1950:22-6, 2082:404–6. It is noteworthy that no indication is given anywhere in the edition of the manuscripts used.

On Karel Uutenhove of Ghent, who since the summer of 1528 had been a member of Erasmus' household, see Ep 2001 n7. Within the month he would depart for Italy to continue his studies, bearing letters of introduction from Erasmus (Epp 2105–6) with him.

TO THAT MOST HONOURABLE YOUTH KAREL UUTENHOVE OF GHENT FROM DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Dear Karel, pride and joy of the Uutenhoves, how many young men there are today who, but for the portraits of their ancestors, give no evidence of nobility and who think that the family name is useful only when it allows them, under its shadow, to indulge more freely, and with less risk of punishment, in idleness, gaming, amours, feasting, and depravity of every kind. So twisted are their ideas that, although all nobility begins with virtue, they have convinced themselves that virtue means the end of nobility and the dimming of family pride. This, in my opinion, is about as absurd as believing that the sun brings darkness and that night floods the world with light. These people are in the grip of so grave an error that they think idleness, laziness, ignorance of the liberal arts, the corruption of morals through debauchery, and every other sin are not only permissible but honourable for

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18 When Nero ordered Seneca the Younger to commit suicide, Pompeia Paulina, Seneca's wife, also tried, with his reluctant consent, to commit suicide. Nero sent soldiers and servants to rescue her. Tacitus *Annales* 15.63–4.

19 Tacitus *Annales* 15.64. Cf Plato *Phaedo* 118. Before he died, Socrates asked for a cock to be offered to Asclepius.

the nobly born, when in fact such qualities dishonour every mortal man whatever his rank. It is much more shameful to cast a shadow over a luminous pedigree than to be born in a humble home. For no one can control the circumstances of his birth, but just as we are entitled to take the credit if, by discipline and good deeds, we become the founders of a noble line, so we must accept the disgrace if, by a degenerate life, we cast a stain on the nobility that our forebears won by their virtue. Worse still are those who promote themselves with false claims to nobility so that they can do whatever their heart desires.[1]

What an immense gap, most honoured Karel, separates the minds and morals of these people from your own! You are in the bloom of youth, a time when freer conduct is not usually counted a fault, but the dignity of your family and the wealth of your estates, so far from tempting you to foolish pleasures and to idleness (which is the agent of every sin), has guided and inspired your love of learning and of honour. Your philosophy has taught you to judge yourself unworthy of your ancestors unless you can equal or surpass them in the true excellences of the mind. Certainly, your truly noble character was influenced by the close example of your distinguished father, Nicolaas Uutenhove,[2] who besides his fine knowledge of the law and his familiarity with polite letters was blessed with such modesty, prudence, judgment, moderation, and integrity that for many years no one at Ghent earned higher praise for the manner in which he presided over the supreme council of all Flanders. And if amid the clamour of so many noisy causes he could find a moment's leisure, he spent it in turning the pages of the sacred texts, often devoting part of the night to these pursuits. He was a man who shone with the glow of so many fine qualities that pride of family seemed the least part of his fame.

I can only congratulate you on your readiness to follow his example. I wish I could do something to assist you, for I think that you have aimed not just to revive the memory of your eminent father by imitation, but to rival and surpass him, so that you would be entitled to cite, amid general applause, that line from Homer: 'I boast that I am the son of such a father.'[3] A man who resembles his father only in physical appearance but is so far from exhibiting the greater brilliance of his mind that all comparison between

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2093

1 Doubtless a swipe at Heinrich [von] Eppendorf; see Ep 1933 n1.

2 Nicholaas (I) Uutenhove (d 1527), lord of Marckeghem, was a member of the council of Flanders from at least 1498 and in 1515 became its president.

3 *Iliad* 14.113

them ends is not a true son but a bastard. Nobility has three aspects: one is the accident of birth, the second is produced by education in the liberal arts, and the third by outstanding virtues and great service to the state. Clearly, the man who completes the circle in all its parts attains the highest kind of nobility.[4] Your father, as you know, achieved this distinction admirably, and now you have embarked upon the same honourable course and are striving with all your energy to follow in his steps and reach the same goal. And just as no education is complete without a knowledge of languages, so there is no perfect virtue without piety. Piety by itself can make a man noble and happy, while learning without religion may be found in even the most vicious minds. Without these things noble birth has no value except to light the way for the man who aspires to virtue or rescue one who fails to live up to the traditions of his family. He whose fame rests on crime is not just lacking in nobility, he is worse than that; for who would not prefer to live without a name than have the reputation of a Thersites,[5] a Phrynondas,[6] or the Cercopes?[7] Only the man who has won distinction through his own merits is truly noble. He who has nothing to commend him to the attention of posterity but the family portraits that adorn his halls is no better than one who makes false claims to noble birth – such a person is no more entitled to be called noble than a man could be called rich on borrowed money.

In addition to these inspiring advantages we must count also the splendour of the city of Ghent, for I know of no city in all Christendom to be compared with it, whether one considers its power and prestige, its government, or the character of its people. No other place has produced such men of genius or more telling examples of old-fashioned virtue. We still have with us today Louis van Praet,[8] of whom it would be hard to say whether his eminence rests more on his learning or his family tree; then there is Willem de Waele,[9] who possesses a mind of unparalleled acuity; Antonius Clava,[10] old in years but wonderfully young in all the virtues of the mind; Omaar

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4 *Adagia* II vi 86: 'To complete the circle is to render something complete in every detail and in all its parts' (CWE 33 333).
5 A Greek soldier in Homer's *Iliad*, famed for his insolence
6 Notorious swindler mentioned by Aristophanes in *Thesmophoriazusae* 861
7 The treacherous inhabitants of the island of Pithecusae, who were turned into monkeys; Ovid *Metamorphoses* 14.92
8 Ep 1191
9 Ep 301:39n
10 Ep 175:13n

van Edingen,[11] a man whose character is as white as snow; Levinus Ammonius,[12] who is distinguished alike for learning and piety; Nicolaas Uutenhove,[13] a young man of outstanding promise; and I could mention several others. All of these men without exception have the highest hopes of you.

So my dear Karel, people are expecting a great deal of you, not just that you will do justice to the name of Uutenhove and to your father's achievements, but that you will measure up to the reputation of the famous city that bore and nurtured you and to the hopes of men like those I have mentioned. Your father shares this in common with the Roman Cato, that he allowed no moment to pass without garnering the fruits of knowledge;[14] he even brought little books into a meeting so that he could read if there was a free moment in the proceedings, which others usually spend in daydreaming or idle chatter. I commend you for following the example of your father in this respect too, for you never set out on a journey without some learned little work so that, whether you are walking or riding or in company, no moment passes without some gain in knowledge.

So I have prepared this little book in the hope that it will prove an agreeable companion for any time or place, and a companion that is equally helpful and enjoyable. It consists of some pieces of John Chrysostom; it will refine your knowledge of the language by the elegance of its Greek, just as it will inform your heart by its pious teachings. If you like Attic grace, here is your Demosthenes; if you want knowledge of the philosophy of Christ, here you have an eminent theologian. My original plan was to produce a sizeable work of this author for the interested reader, since many now prefer Greek to Latin, and no translation is so felicitous or so accurate as to allow us to dispense with the source. But the new type was not yet ready.[15] So I decided in the meantime to offer readers this small token to excite their interest and console them for the delay. It was my intention to dedicate this book, whatever its merits, jointly to you and your father as a memorial of our friendship and some return for the keen interest which your excellent father took in me, hoping (if my humble pen has any skill at all) that it might rescue his memory from oblivion.

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11 Ep 2060
12 Ep 2082
13 Nicholaas (II) Uutenhove (c 1499–1549), was the first cousin of Karel Uutenhove. In 1529 he became councillor-in-ordinary of the council of Flanders. In 1547 he became a member of the grand council of Mechelen.
14 Valerius Maximus 8.7.2
15 And would not be until 1531. See Ep 2062 n7.

But I shall not end this letter without recording the epitaphs that I have dedicated to his memory.[16] The Latin epitaph is as follows:

Here lies buried beneath this stone the famous
Uutenhove, a celebrated hero
Who long guided superbly Flanders' council
As no other had ever done before him.
This sad tribute his orphaned children offer'd
To their father, a vain though pious service,
For what need does he have for such remembrance,
Since his virtues, which all acclaim, will linger
Where no force neither time can now efface them.

The Greek goes like this:

'What goddess are you?' 'Justice is my name.'
'Why, then, these tears?' 'A noble magistrate
Whose name was Uutenhovius I mourn.
His great renown on all of Flanders shone.
No better man than this has ever lived,
And when he died, I seemed to die with him.
He was not simply just, but Justice' self.'

Farewell.
Basel, 1 February 1529

2094 / To the Reader [Basel, c February 1529]

This is a letter appended to the second edition of the *Apologia adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos* (Basel: Froben 1529). On the genesis and publication of the first edition, see Epp 1877, 1879, 1888, 1967. The new edition has no month-date. Allen conjectured that since there is no mention in the present letter of the attack on Erasmus by the Spanish Franciscan Luis de Carvajal (Ep 2110 n10), Erasmus had not yet heard of it. As soon as Carvajal's book reached him (in late February), Erasmus seems to have set aside work on the new edition of the *Apologia* to dash off a reply to Carvajal in time for the spring fair at Frankfurt. Work on the *Apologia* was then resumed (cf Ep 2133:26–9) at a pace

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16 The Latin epitaph is in the hendecasyllabic metre; the Greek is in iambics. The translations are an attempt to imitate the original metres.

that made it available for the autumn fair: the *Loca emendata* that are appended to it (Ep 2095) were being printed in June (Ep 2185:62–5).

The letter offers Erasmus' own account of the background, course, and outcome of the conference of theologians at Valladolid (27 June–13 August 1527) that examined the charges of heresy brought against him by conservative critics in the religious orders in Spain, chiefly Dominicans and Franciscans. For a first-hand account of the developments leading up to the conference, see Ep 1814.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE FAIR-MINDED READER

Who would have expected such stupid, dull-witted, ignorant, and malicious views from men who see themselves as pillars of the church? And the ringleaders in this business are first and foremost the Dominicans – not rank and file members, but doctors of theology; secondly there are the Franciscans – and not just ordinary Franciscans, but members of that seraphic community known as the Observants.[1] Earlier during the Lutheran troubles they were asleep, but now (mysteriously) they have found the confidence to rush into the forefront of the battle. I imagine the pope threatened to rescind all the privileges he had showered on them if they did not show their mettle. Often, however, their actions simply detract from the influence and good name of the seraphic order without greatly assisting the cause of the church. They seem to have great faith in the stupidity of the majority of men. So relying on this, they stoutly condemn the tiny company of the intelligent and the learned. They are wise to fight with the tongue rather than the pen, for once something is committed to writing, it is difficult to disown it, although often enough they do this too. But when something is said, whether in public or before an audience of hundreds, and someone challenges them, they have a ready answer: 'I did not say it,' 'I did not say those things.' If it comes down to the testimony of witnesses, many are sympathetic towards them, many cannot remember, and those who think they remember generally provide different versions of what they heard. Finally, anyone who quarrels with a brother has to deal with the whole order. So no one is willing to get mixed up in such controversies. They are privy to

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2094

1 The Observants were those members of the Franciscan order who claimed to 'observe' exactly the Rule of St Francis, in contrast to the Conventuals, whom they regarded as too worldly and lax. In 1517, at a general chapter of the order summoned by Pope Leo X, the Observants were formally separated from the Conventuals and declared to be the true Order of St Francis.

many people's secrets, they have their spies[2] in the halls of princes and in the households of the wealthy, they have various secret stratagems for taking revenge on those who are unsympathetic to the order. As a result prudent men hold them in dread rather than affection, believing the best course is to have nothing at all to do with people of that sort. If you allow them a toe in the door, they insert the whole body;[3] if you are uncooperative or offend them, they have remarkably ingenious ways of taking their revenge.

Need I mention here the fuss they caused, first in the emperor's court and then at Salamanca, whenever they asserted openly and publicly that Erasmus was a heretic and worse than Luther.[4] When the leading men realized that their reckless behaviour could not be restrained,[5] they ordered them, if they had anything worth investigating, to lay it before the duly appointed judges and not disturb Spain with seditious clamour of this sort. They were allowed ample time for this.[6] Seven religious orders were involved,[7] from which were selected all the best scholars. In the meantime they had the assistance of a volume of exceptional scurrility whose author had laboured for all of seven years to select from my total corpus whatever could be twisted into a slanderous attack.[8] Without this, when would these

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2 Literally 'Corycaeans'; see Ep 2082 n47.

3 The Latin proverb is 'Do not show a fool your finger in case he swallows your hand'; cf *Adagia* III v 5.

4 See Ep 1909:37–45, where Erasmus attributes the agitation at the imperial court to the Dominicans and that at the University of Salamanca to the Franciscans.

5 Erasmus' word for 'leading men' is *principes*, which in this context cannot be read simply as 'princes.' The court of Charles V was, to be sure, interested in the controversies over Erasmus' influence in Spain, and in Ep 1909:44–5 Erasmus says that the disturbances at the emperor's court and at Salamanca (see preceding note) were 'calmed though not surpressed by the emperor and a few of the archbishops.' But it was Alonso Manrique de Lara, archbishop of Seville, inquisitor-general of Spain, and dedicatee of the *Apologia adversus monachos Hispanos*, who took responsibility for the orderly investigation of the charges against Erasmus. In this he had the active support of Alonso de Fonseca, archbishop of Toledo and primate of Spain.

6 See Ep 1791.

7 The same number is given in Epp 1893:38, 1909:55–6, 1977:31–3. In Ep 1879:37–45, Erasmus had enumerated six: Trinitarians, Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Augustinians, and Benedictines, but in Ep 1985:18 he somewhat tentatively added the Carthusians.

8 The reference is to Erasmus' old antagonist Edward Lee (Ep 1341A:823–30), who since 1525 had been Henry VIII's ambassador at the court of Charles V in Spain. Erasmus was convinced that Lee was behind the Spanish attacks on his orthodoxy and that he had composed and circulated a 'scurrilous attack' on

fellows (I was tempted to call them 'potbellies')[9] have found the time to turn the pages of so many volumes? When they had collected an immense pile of articles, still in an undigested form and with much repetition, they were required by the inquisitor-general to put this mass of material in order and condense it, so as to allow the case to be tried. This was done, and an impressive volume was made public. They had been advised by the inquisitor to avoid abuse and carry out their work in a spirit of Christian moderation, but despite this warning, every heading contains an outrageous insult. They added an abusive preface; in fact, no part of the book is free from insults – unless you think it is not an insult to say: 'He pokes fun at the Blessed Virgin,' 'He condemns the veneration of the saints,' 'His view of the Trinity is heretical,' and much else – this pious brief is crammed with such things. It was presented to a judge, yet throughout it was an attempt to prejudice him and prejudge the issue. Could even the most hostile critic have exposed the ignorance and malice of these men more effectively than they do themselves? And because of the brilliant articles it contained, first the emperor and then the archbishops were pestered with an appeal.[10] Leading theologians from three universities were summoned,[11] a synod was called, and a mass of the Holy Spirit was said. Alonso, archbishop of Seville, a man distinguished by family, learning, and purity of character, presided over the case. He opened proceedings with the grave injunction that they should constantly hold themselves in check so as to avoid brawling and intemperate language. My defenders in their opening statements were most moderate in their praise of me. But immediately there was a great uproar from the monks, which even the authority of the archbishop could not calm, for they had decided that this was the way to win, knowing that their case was much the weaker. An outbreak of the plague caused the meeting to be adjourned. But the conduct of the monks had been so bad that the archbishop was happy not to reconvene the synod. They boasted that they had collected

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him. No such work was ever published and no manuscript has been discovered. Although it is true that Lee was doing his best to sow opposition to Erasmus in Spain, it is unlikely that he had as much influence on Erasmus' Spanish critics as Erasmus believed. See Epp 1735 n7, 1744 n19, 1814 n45, 1994A n15.

9 On Erasmus' tendency to refer to monks, particularly members of the mendicant orders, as 'potbellies' (*ventres*), ie those who serve the cause of 'their own bellies,' see Ep 1980 n1.

10 The archbishops were Alonso de Fonseca of Toledo and Alonso Manrique de Lara of Seville.

11 Two of the three were Alcalá and Salamanca (Ep 1814:276–8). The third was probably Toledo (Ep 2157:607–8).

a longer list of errors, but were told, 'You can know a lion by his claws.'[12] Now, I think, they have received a copy of the polemic that Béda spewed out against me some time ago.[13] Nothing has appeared for two hundred years to match it for stupidity, malice, and ignorance – in a word, nothing more typical of Béda's talents.

After this they complain that I am unfair to monks. I challenge any of them, whether Dominican or Franciscan, or members of any other order or observance, to produce a single person to whom I have shown myself less friendly simply because he was a monk, unless it is generally held that anyone who will not quietly accept this kind of abuse is an enemy. Good opinions must be earned by good behaviour, not extorted by insults. If Dominic or Francis were alive, it is to them, and no one else, that I would appeal, since the monks take pride in these men as their founders. But alas, how great is the decline from the moral standards they set! This remark is aimed at a good number of the monks, but not at all. Let us pray that the Lord will bring a modicum of sense to these bloated dullards. Reader, farewell.

2095 / To the Reader [Basel, c February 1529]

This letter is the preface to the *Loca quaedam in aliquot Erasmi lucubrationibus per ipsum emendata*, a work that was appended to the second edition of the *Apologia adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos* (Ep 2094). It consisted of 26 octavo pages of corrigenda for some of Erasmus' works: the revised edition of Jerome of 1524–6 (Ep 1465), Psalm 85 of 1528 (Ep 2017), the 1527 edition of the New Testament, and the 1524 composite volume of the Paraphrases on the Gospels and Acts. As Erasmus explains in the letter, he did not expect that there would be any demand for new editions of these works and, warned in a dream that he had not very long to live, he wished to record the corrections and improvements that had occurred to him.

The *Loca* have never been included in any collected edition of Erasmus' *opera*, and they appear never to have been reprinted separately. As Allen observed in his introduction, the reason for this was doubtless that Erasmus, contrary to the fears and expectations expressed in the dream, lived long enough to produce revised editions of the works in question, thus rendering the *Loca* superfluous. Consequently, this letter, with its vivid account of Erasmus' dream, also escaped notice, and Allen's version was the first to to be published since the original of 1529.

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12 *Adagia* I ix 34; the sense is that one can judge the whole from a single instance.
13 The *Annotationes* of 1526 against Erasmus and Lefèvre (Ep 1721 introduction)

No precise date being possible, Allen placed the letter conjecturally at the time when the volume in which it appeared (Ep 2094) was in preparation. It is possible, however, that the letter was written closer to the time of the printing of the volume in June (cf Ep 2185:62–5).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE PIOUS READER, GREETING

Every day, dear reader, the truth of Horace's advice becomes increasingly clear to me, that if we want a work of ours to survive us and be in everyone's hands, we should hold it back until the ninth year.[1] In this respect I admit I have sinned grievously, since in almost every case I have not so much published my works as rushed them into print; in fact, frequently I have not kept a manuscript for a single hour, sometimes even handing the sheets to the printer while the ink was still wet upon the page. So now that the advancing years and my health make me count each day my last, I thought that, as an honest Christian, I should repair my earlier carelessness with an effort which, though late, is not entirely pointless, and make a separate list of errors which I discovered after my works were published. As the poet says: 'I shall come forward as witness to my own sin.[2] I can now say gladly in the words of St Paul (and may it turn out happily for me!): 'I am being poured out, and the time of my dissolution is at hand.'[3] But because of my personal Terminus,[4] I prefer to quote from Prudentius' poem:

> My Terminus approaches and already God brings close
> The day that borders on the evils of old age[5]

although when Prudentius wrote these lines, he was almost ten years younger than I am.

Now if I tell you my dream, I am afraid I may seem to have adopted the unfamiliar role of oneiroscopist.[6] Make fun of my dream if you like, but we must take heed of its salutary message. Last month something happened

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2095

1 *Ars poetica* 388
2 Ovid *Amores* 2.8.26
3 2 Tim 4:6
4 Erasmus customarily signed important documents with a seal showing the head of Terminus encircled by the motto *Cedo nulli* 'I yield to no one.' See Ep 2018 n2.
5 *Cathemerinon* prol 4–5
6 Erasmus uses the relatively unfamiliar Greek word ὀνειροπόλος 'an interpreter of dreams.'

that required me to rise earlier than I am accustomed. While I was kneeling by my bed, as usual, to say my prayers, sleep stole upon me as I prayed. In fact, even while I was praying, I seemed to experience a strange, otherworldly sensation. I felt I was staying at an uncomfortable inn among an unknown people. A young man appeared to me with a most handsome face and such a lively expression that just to look at him filled me with great delight. 'Why, Erasmus,' he said, 'are you staying here? This is not a very comfortable place.' 'It seems,' I said, 'that I am in a foreign land and in a strange place.' 'Why, then,' he said, 'don't you move at once?' 'There is nothing,' I replied, 'I would like more. But I am afraid of exchanging an uncomfortable place for a worse.' 'But if you will follow me,' he said, 'I shall show you a place that is very peaceful, where smoke does not fill every corner, the roof does not leak when it rains, the walls are not open to the winds, there are no cracks that threaten imminent collapse, and you will not be troubled by hissing snakes, croaking jackdaws, snarling magpies, braying asses, or barking dogs.' 'That is the sort of home I should like to have,' I said. Then he told me to follow him and I did so.

He showed me a meadow of such beauty as no human speech could convey – so I shall not delay the reader with an account of it. Everywhere in that meadow there were palaces which, by comparison, make the halls of kings look like pigsties. I was seized by an overwhelming emotion and wanted to rush there at once. But the young man took me by the hand and said, 'You must not do that. To everyone is his appointed time.[7] I shall return shortly and take you there. Meantime, gather up those of your belongings that are worthy of this place.' 'Worthy of this place?' I said. 'But there is no Codrus more Codrus-like than I.'[8] Then he said, 'The fact that you are sorry because you have no money for the journey will be money enough. For you will be going to someone who is as generous as he is rich.' With these words he vanished. I awoke and began to reflect on what this strange dream could mean.

So, good reader, after so many different warnings, I am doing the best I can to reach that place if with no valuable assets, at least with the lightest possible burden of error. The works of Jerome, the critical edition of the New Testament, and the Paraphrases will perhaps not be published again in my lifetime. So I have decided to publish a list of passages that need correction along with the appropriate references. Thus anyone who wishes to do so may correct his own copy, and if some publisher should eventually decide on a new edition, he will have the means to offer a better text.

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7 Virgil *Aeneid* 10.467
8 Codrus is the proverbial poor man. See *Adagia* I vi 76.

Here perhaps there will be someone who will expect me to alter everything that has met with any criticism at all. But that would be to pervert the text, not to correct it. I note passages that have been attacked and some that have not, but only those that require correction. A great number of these errors have arisen from the carelessness of scribes and printers, some were slips of the pen, some were the result of ignorance on my part or want of thought; but at no point do I confess to the sin of impiety – certainly my mind is free of any intention of impiety. Many of the corrections that I am issuing now were printed earlier at the conclusion of my *Supputationes*,[9] but since they were buried in that work, it seemed a good idea to include them here and make them available to a wider audience. So much for those who claim that Erasmus is impatient of criticism and at the first syllable of dissent shows his horns.[10] Surely an author who exposes errors that had previously passed unnoticed would be ready to recognize those pointed out by others? But who could put up with these creatures, whose stock in trade is insults and slanders, who distort even what is manifestly correct, and have no other thought than to gain notoriety by whatever means they can?

It only remains to issue a word or two of caution to the printers. I shall not stand in the way of any of them publishing whatever he wishes, but I do not want to mislead people by my silence. I have noted only those passages that needed correction and could be explained in a few words; complex passages requiring prolonged attention and lengthy explanation I have passed over, for example, the question of the Herods[11] and of the genealogies,[12] in which there is considerable disagreement in the manuscripts and among translators. Similarly, I have omitted evidence that simply expands, or explains, or supports my previous comments, or that might prove helpful in rebutting criticism, for my daily reading of Greek and Latin texts supplies me with a great amount of such supplementary material. Moreover, I have not bothered to point out the sort of slips that always elude copyists

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9 At the end of the *Supputatio errorum in censuris Bedae* of 1527 (Ep 2033 n14), there are four octavo pages of corrections for the Paraphrases.

10 Cf *Adagia* III iii 12 and I viii 66.

11 No fewer than six Herods appear in the Gospels and the book of Acts, and the biblical authors do not always clearly distinguish one from another. Erasmus found this troublesome and occasionally made mistakes in his identifications. See *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 55 n32.

12 The genealogies of Jesus in Matthew (1:1–17) and Luke (3:23–38) not only vary significantly from one another but individually have serious internal difficulties that require extensive commentary. For Erasmus' treatment of these matters, see CWE 45 35–40 (Matthew) and LB VII 316A–318C (Luke).

and printers, provided they are of the kind that a reader who is not entirely stupid could readily detect. It is possible that in the near future I shall come upon other errors that have eluded me so far.

I did not want to conceal this situation from the printers in case, while seeking a profit, they make a loss. Now, reader, here are the passages I have noted. Remember Erasmus in your prayers to God.

2096 / From Georgius Amelius Freiburg, 3 February 1529

The autograph of this letter, which was first published as Ep 95 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

A native of Moravia, Georgius Amelius (Achtznicht), who had studied law in Bologna, matriculated at Freiburg in September 1521. In 1525 he became the first professor ordinarius of canon law at that university, a position that he held until his death in 1541. This is the only letter from or to him in the surviving correspondence, but it is clear that Amelius and Erasmus maintained friendly contact with one another during the latter's years in Freiburg. Among other things, Amelius advised Erasmus on the preparation of his second will (1530–3); see AK Epp 2080, 2083.

Cordial greetings. Although, most learned Erasmus, you receive a variety of letters every day from a host of correspondents, I have hitherto not had the courage to send you anything of my own, mainly because I did not think it courteous to bother you with my inarticulate babble, standing as you do at the very pinnacle of eloquence. If I am now abandoning my former courtesy, I put the blame not so much on the weakness of my character as on the fault of the times. Recently, however, at the instigation of my distinguished patron,[1] I found an excuse for writing to you, and my old shyness has given way before the pressure of his wishes. My capitulation was due in part to the renown of your name and in part to the great good will and devotion that I feel for you. I hope I shall be able to repay you for this great favour, if by this brief letter I shall be the first to open the door of your friendship to my new friend, Antonio of Gurk,[2] and begin for myself an exchange of letters between us. Here then, in a word or two, is my reason for writing.

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2096

1 Possibly the count of Ortenburg; see n6 below.

2 See following paragraph.

A young Spaniard called Antonio de Salamanca,[3] who wishes to further his education, has recently come to Freiburg. He is administrator of the diocese of Gurk, a young man of exceptionally mature judgment and of such fine character that you would rightly judge him a true Spaniard. He intends to apply himself mainly to the study of law, so he will need a regular tutor at his home with whom to discuss various questions as they arise. Since there is no one here at present who is interested in such an honourable position, this excellent young man, who is coadjutor bishop of Gurk, has pressed me to write to you, as he is doing himself, for we know you have a wide knowledge of people and their abilities. He is resolved on the study of law, and needs your help in choosing a reliable teacher who is free.[4] Since there is no one available in Freiburg, we must look elsewhere. I beg and entreat you with all my strength to help him. This young man loves you like a father. He has always had the warmest feelings and the kindest words for Erasmus. You can readily get some sense of his learning and the respect he has for you from his letter,[5] written though it was on the spur of the moment. So, dear Erasmus, if you know anyone even moderately versed in this field of law to whom you yourself would like to do a good turn, please send him to us as soon as possible. Such a service, believe me, will be deeply appreciated by the Count of Ortenburg[6] and Antonio de Salamanca.

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3 Antonio Hoyos de Salamanca (Ep 2098)

4 By 'free' Amelius seems to mean 'unencumbered.' Erasmus was not certain what was meant, and debated with himself whether the intended meaning was 'unmarried' or 'unaffiliated' with any of the new sects. See Ep 2118:12–16. For Erasmus' recommendation, see Ep 2098.

5 Not extant, but see Ep 2098:7.

6 Gabriel de Salamanca (d 1539) came to Germany in the entourage of Archduke Ferdinand and soon became a powerful figure at his court, playing a leading role in the government of the Tirol and the other Austrian lands. In March 1524 he was raised to the rank of count of Ortenburg in Carinthia. Forced from his Austrian offices in 1526 in the wake of charges of massive fraud brought by his German rivals at court, he retained the favour and trust of Ferdinand and received a lifelong pension as compensation. In the following years Gabriel proved indispensable in the financial dealings of the Hapsburgs with the Fuggers and others, raising a considerable portion of the sums needed for Ferdinand's coronation as king of Hungary, for court expenses, and for the war against the Turks. On 23 July he was appointed governor (*Landvogt*) of Upper Alsace. In Ep 2098 Erasmus recalls his earlier, now lost, correspondence with Gabriel, who had rendered him some unnamed service. (Allen speculated that this Gabriel might have been the 'Gabriel Saucius' greeted in Ep 2008:43.)

Farewell, prince of letters, to whom I commend myself with all my heart.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 3 February 1529

Georgius Amelius, your most devoted servant

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, consummate scholar in every branch of sacred and humane letters. In Basel 40

2097 / From Johannes Fabri Innsbruck, 4 February 1529

The manuscript of this letter was in the Burscher collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It was first published as Ep 96 in Förstemann/Günther.

Since 1523, Erasmus' old friend and correspondent Johannes Fabri (Ep 386) had been an important member of the court of Ferdinand of Austria, who in 1530 appointed him archbishop of Vienna. A patron of learning and an advocate of Catholic reform, but hostile to Lutheranism and Anabaptism, Fabri strongly supported Ferdinand's harsh measures against heresy in all its forms (cf Ep 1926 n10).

Greeting. At last, dear Erasmus, my distinguished friend, the plan long contemplated by the majority for the ruin of your city has been put into action; they want, it seems, by armed terror, to crush the few humble followers of Christ's teaching and drag them into their own apostasy.[1] I am greatly

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2097

1 In late December 1528 the tensions in Basel between the evangelical majority, led by Johannes Oecolampadius, and the Catholic minority (still powerful in the city government) reached the boiling point. It took mediation by agents of the Swiss Confederation to prevent a civil conflict. The resulting agreement of 5 January 1529 prescribed that preaching was to be based solely on the Bible, permitted the celebration of mass once a day in three churches, and scheduled a public disputation for 30 May. On 8–9 February, after the city council had demonstrated its tolerant indifference when mass was nonetheless celebrated regularly and Catholic preachers and pamphleteers denounced the reformers, public disorder, including image smashing in the minster and other churches, erupted (for Erasmus' own account of these troubles, see Ep 2158:1–37). Thereupon the leading Catholic members of the city council resigned and mass was formally abolished. Nearly all the professors resigned from the university and left the city, as did the cathedral chapter, and no further thought was given to a disputation. The Reform Ordinance (*Reformationsordnung*) establishing the new evangelical church order was issued on 1 April. Erasmus departed for Freiburg on 13 April; see Ep 2149 introduction.

pained and disgusted that this fine city is being ruined by such vile creatures. But above all else I cannot accept that you are living in the midst of this rebellious uproar, for I greatly fear they may prove our hopes and expectations false and make some move against you. I am pleased, however, to hear of the plan you have made; I am told you have decided to take flight for your own safety.[2] I know how difficult and painful it will be to move the Muses from a place that has been so convenient for your work. On the other hand I can guess how ill suited to one another are Mars and the Muses.

Today the bishop of Trent[3] happened to mention you. He too is very worried about you, but he cannot think of any means of assisting you in your present trouble that you would accept and find attractive. You have captivated him completely, and there is nothing he would refuse to do for your good self. Again today he asked me to write to you and tell you that the offer he once made to you that would allow you to live out the rest of your life here is always open.[4] Indeed, if you do not reject his generous offer, he promises the terms will be richer than you expected. So let us know soon if you are interested. Farewell.

From Innsbruck, 4 February 1529

Your friend, Fabri

To the eminent and most learned Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, his dearest friend

2098 / To Antonio Hoyos de Salamanca Basel, 6 February 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Antonio Hoyos de Salamanca (d 1551) was the nephew of Gabriel de Salamanca (Ep 2096 n6) and bishop-elect of Gurk in Carinthia, a see that he did not occupy until 1533. In 1529 he went to Freiburg to study law, matriculating in April. At some point, however, he had already written to Erasmus (see line 7) asking him to recommend a tutor (cf Ep 2096). Erasmus here responds with the warm recommendation of someone whom he does not name and whose identity is not certain (see n3). Hoyos' reply is Ep 2104, lines 18–19 of which indicates a passage at the end of this letter was for some reason not included in the printed version.

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2 Cf Epp 2089:21, 2104:18–20.

3 Bernhard of Cles (Epp 1357, 2007), King Ferdinand's most trusted adviser

4 Bernhard had repeatedly invited Erasmus to settle in Trent on generous terms (see Epp 1409, 1771:13–16, 2159:12–14).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ANTONIO DE SALAMANCA, BISHOP-ELECT OF GURK, GREETING

It was with considerable pleasure that I received the news from Henricus Glareanus[1] that the nephew of the illustrious count of Ortenburg is staying in Freiburg. I have come to know the count's kindness in the past, not just from the affectionate tone of a letter he sent me, but also from a small service he once did me. Your letter[2] doubled my pleasure, for besides its learning, good sense, and piety, not usual in a young man, it breathed a spirit of great good will towards me, which I count as not the least of my blessings. I thank you sincerely for this and I shall try to see that the great favour you have been kind enough to show me will not appear wasted on a complete ingrate. I congratulate you that your merits are now joined to a position of great influence that will enable you to render excellent service to the Christian faith; but I congratulate you even more on possessing a truly pious soul and on your desire to equip your mind with such knowledge and learning as will fit you for the discharge of your duties. The violent storms that beat upon the church call for outstanding captains, men of great learning and piety. Such a one I am confident you will prove to be.

So with regard to your request I am very willing to fall in with your most pious wishes, if it is at all possible; for there is a real shortage of the sort of people your Lordship wants. There is only one person whom I should feel confident enough to introduce you to, that is to say, a person of unblemished character and agreeable manners, with a discriminating knowledge of good literature, a man who has made some considerable headway in the law and is totally independent of the controversies that are now destroying the peace of the church.[3] He will be back in Freiburg in a few

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2098

1 Glareanus (Ep 440) was, like Erasmus, about to migrate from Basel to Freiburg, where he would take up a lectureship in poetry; cf Ep 2105:25–6.

2 See Ep 2096:31.

3 On the basis of Ep 2104:6–8, Allen (2on) identified 'this young lawyer' as Bonifacius Amerbach. But the description here does not fit Bonifacius, who had done more than 'make some considerable headway in the law' and was in fact an established professor of law at Basel with no plans to go 'back' to Freiburg. Furthermore, as Allen failed to see, Erasmus subsequently referred to the person he had recommended as 'Peter' (Ep 2118:17, 49). Taking this reference as their clue, the editors of the Amerbach correspondence convincingly argued that Erasmus was almost certainly referring to Peter Bitterlin (d 1544), a student in Basel since 1520 who had already studied law and was about to resettle in Freiburg for further study (see AK Ep 1331); Bonifacius Amerbach had warmly recommended Bitterlin to Udalricus Zasius, the

days;[4] so it will be possible to meet and talk with him without expense to yourself. If, in your good judgment, you form the same opinion of him as is held not just by me but by all good men (and I hope and trust that this will be the case), it will not be difficult to make some arrangement with him.[5] I shall give him a somewhat longer letter to take to you,[6] but at present I have no time to write more. I pray that your Lordship will enjoy every success and that you will count Erasmus one of your most devoted servants.

Basel, 6 February 1529

2099 / From Heinrich Eppendorf Strasbourg, [c February] 1529

This is Eppendorf's response to Ep 2086. It was first published in the *Pirckheimeri opera*.

THE RESPONSE OF HEINRICH EPPENDORF

I understand that my letter was never delivered to you,[1] but here is what I wrote. I reminded you of your obligations and of the covenant which, according to you, is so binding upon us 'that it could not be undone without incurring the serious charge of perfidy.'[2] You see, good sir, how you are stabbing yourself with your own weapons,[3] for not only have you failed to abide by the agreement, but with that wicked letter of yours you are undoing the friendship that was patched up between us through the efforts of some decent men. Did I ever write that 'you need my friendship' – although

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renowned Freiburg jurist (AK Ep 1322:19–26). Surviving records show that in 1525 Bitterlin was master of the Latin school attached to the cathedral chapter in Basel and that in 1527 he was one of the witnesses to Erasmus' first will (CWE 12 549:132). In later years (1536–8) Bitterlin taught Roman law at Basel and then departed for Ulm, where he was appointed legal consultant to the city. See also Ep 2104 n2.

4 Bitterlin matriculated at Freiburg on 16 February 1529 (AK Ep 1331 introduction)

5 After his arrival in Freiburg, Bitterlin reported to Amerbach that he was staying with Hoyos (AK Ep 1331:3–4), though he evidently did not become the latter's tutor. See Epp 2104, 2118.

6 Not extant

2099

1 See Ep 2086 introduction.

2 The reference is to Ep 2086:1–3. Erasmus wrote *crimine* 'charge,' for which Eppendorf substitutes *nota* 'criticism.'

3 *Adagia* I i 51

time and time again you have shamelessly proclaimed your friendship for me, adding what a good hand you are at ruining the reputation of worthy men? You imagine, I suppose, that this will frighten me off from protecting my good name. I have never injured you, although you treacherously attempted to ruin my life and reputation once and for all. I know how a reputation is made, even if you have not shown me.

Far from trying to get my hands on other people's money, I am more than generous with my own. Nor do I choose to mention now the efforts by which you amassed your money. You may help anyone you please, but do not trouble yourself, I beg you, over my expenditures.

What you have done was a requirement of the covenant we entered into. I ask you, how much credit did that reflect on you? Certainly I would not have been driven to such a course by several thousand gold pieces.[4] Perhaps some statement of this sort did slip out at a banquet from someone who counts nothing more precious than reputation.[5]

What rumours have started, I do not know, nor what have reached you. By rumours of that sort I seek for myself neither fame, nor gain, nor dishonour for you. You can appreciate this from my tardiness in raising the matter of the covenant, for the last thing I expected was to find you wanting in good faith.

With regard to the book, you have not dried up as a writer, and you did have something that could readily have been dedicated to me. You may inscribe your holy and solemn tomes to anyone you please (and I realize I have nothing in common with widows).[6] As for the long wars you are constantly fighting with the theologians, take care that you do not bring them on yourself. None of this, however, concerns me: what I expect from you is simply that you keep your word.

What is the point of excusing your treachery by making such an odious comparison as that 'he who fails to pay his debt by the appointed day leaves himself open to the charge of bad faith, which no one knows better than I'?[7] I implore you in the name of God, tell me: to whom do I owe money beyond the appointed day? If it is a disgrace to have debts, then the greatest kings and emperors are in disgrace. But you are always making jokes like this with a bite in them.

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4 The Latin word is *aureus*. Cf Ep 2086 n3.
5 Eppendorf is probably referring to himself.
6 On this and the sentence that follows, see Ep 2086:34–8.
7 Cited, with considerable alteration of wording, from Ep 2086:48–54

What the arbitrators are demanding I do not know. But you know what is required by the covenant and my innocence. There is no need to do my bidding. Do what you have to do on the instructions of those worthy men. If Duke George thinks we are reconciled, nothing from me will alter this impression. Otto's case has no bearing on mine, and I don't understand what you hope to gain from the letter written to the prince and the one to him.[8] You can produce them if you wish for all I care. Otto must stand or fall on the merits of his own case.

When I agreed to our reconciliation, I did so with the intention of being your friend for ever, if you will allow it to be so. I shall take no notice of the spitefulness of the age or of wicked tongues. Farewell.

Strasbourg, 1529 etc

Heinrich Eppendorf, your friend if you wish it so

2100 / To Mary of Hungary [Basel, c February 1529]

Here Allen printed the opening and closing paragraphs of *De vidua christiana* (Basel: Froben, March 1529), which together constitute the equivalent of a dedicatory letter for the work. Allen assigned the approximate date on the basis of the date of publication.

Mary of Austria (1505–58), sister of Charles V and Ferdinand of Austria, was the widow of Louis II, king of Hungary and Bohemia, who had been killed in the summer of 1526 when the Turks under Suleiman I annihilated the Hungarian army on the plain at Mohács. When her brother Ferdinand claimed the succession to Louis, Mary helped him to secure a significant portion of the country, the title to which was contested by John Zápolyai, who had the support of the Turks. In her grief over the death of Louis, Mary refused to consider marrying again for the sake of Hapsburg dynastic interests. In 1531, however, after the death of her aunt, Margaret of Austria, she agreed to become regent of the Netherlands, in which capacity she served with distinction until the abdication of her brother Charles in 1555. Though the extant personal correspondence between Mary and Erasmus consists of only six letters, of which this is the first, she and Erasmus had ample correspondence via intermediaries. In the period 1525–31, the principal intermediary was Mary's court preacher and confessor Johann Henckel (Ep 2110), and then, starting in 1530, it was her secretary, Nicholaus Olahus (Ep 2339).

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8 Cf Ep 2086:68–73.

In 1528, Henckel informed Erasmus that Mary sought consolation in her widowhood from reading pious books, that she was particularly fond of his Paraphrases, and that she would react with special gratitude if Erasmus were to dedicate a work to her (Ep 2011:33–55). Erasmus obliged with *De vidua christiana*, but his reward was less munificent than he had hoped. Mary, oppressed by financial difficulties, sent only a handwritten note of thanks, and Henckel sent a goblet with further expressions of her gratitude (Epp 2309, 2345, 2350). But Mary's esteem for Erasmus was genuine. In 1533 she offered him an honourable position and a secure income if he should choose to return to the Netherlands (Epp 2785, 2820). Erasmus found the offer attractive, but by then his health had deteriorated so seriously that he could not undertake the journey.

FOR THE ILLUSTRIOUS FORMER QUEEN OF HUNGARY AND BOHEMIA, MARY, SISTER OF CHARLES THE EMPEROR AND KING FERDINAND

Mary, illustrious queen whose glory brings honour to all women of royal blood, among the countless sorts of calamities that beset and encompass our mortal lives, I have always thought there is no graver or more deadly evil than war,[1] which is all the more abominable since as a rule it is caused by the inhumanity of man to man. Earthquakes, flooding seas and rivers, lightning, plagues, and other misfortunes of that sort, however terrible they may be, can make us victims, but they cannot make us break God's laws. Moreover, since they can be blamed on destiny, they have in common the consolation of necessity, which even the gods, it is said, cannot resist.[2] Our pain is softened by the inevitability of fate, to which all men alike must yield; by the same token our hearts are wounded more deeply by those ills we bring upon ourselves. Though misfortunes cause pain to their victims, at least they do not make them hapless wretches, for no one can properly be called a wretch unless he brings his miseries upon himself. War, the bringer of death and sorrow, drags every kind of evil in its train, yet it has hardly anything more painful or more cruel to inflict on us than the sudden parting of loving hearts.

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2100

1 A view that Erasmus argued most famously in the *Querela pacis* (Ep 603) but that also found expression again and again in his letters; see Ep 1225:244–7 with n52.

2 Fate is sometimes represented in ancient literature as more powerful than the gods; see eg Homer *Iliad* 16.431–47 and Virgil *Aeneid* 10.11–13.

Several years ago I dedicated *The Christian Prince* to Charles, now emperor,[3] and more recently the *Paraphrase on John* to Prince Ferdinand,[4] now king of Hungary and Bohemia, to both of whom I owe everything, both public and private. Lately I inscribed *Christian Marriage* to your maternal aunt, the queen of England.[5] It was not that they needed my advice, but I wanted my works, whatever their merits, to be commended to the world by the honour of their names. If I now dedicate this little book to you, it is because I was encouraged to do so in letters, and not just once or half-heartedly,[6] from that good man Johann Henckel, whose assiduous preaching of the truth of the gospel has been nurtured by your generous support. If he has not misled me, you will be kind enough to accept this work, although you have no need of it yourself. Its message, however, unless I am mistaken, will have value for others. This will be the goal of my ambition,[7] to have obtained your indulgence. I make this request on three counts: I acted under orders; I have done my best; and I have acted with good will. May the Lord pour out every spiritual joy upon your Highness and upon all widows. Amen.

2101 / From Viglius Zuichemus Dôle, 15 February 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. Erasmus' reply is Ep 2111.

Viglius Zuichemus (Wigle van Aytta van Zwichem, 1507–77) took his surname from the town of Zwichem in Friesland. After reading classical authors with Conradus Goclenius and Rutgerus Rescius at Louvain (1523–4), he commenced the study of law. In 1526 he moved to Dôle in the Franche-Comté to continue his legal studies, remaining there until the spring of 1529. After acquiring a doctorate in civil and canon law at Valence in May 1529, Viglius went to Bourges to study with the great jurist Andrea Alciati (Ep 1250), who had just taken up a teaching appointment there. In the autumn of 1531, Viglius visited Basel and Freiburg, where he first met Erasmus in person. By the end of October 1531, Viglius was in Padua, where in 1532 he accepted a one-year appointment to lecture on civil law. During that year

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3 *Institutio principis christiani*; Epp 393, 853
4 Ep 1333
5 *Institutio christiani matrimonii*; Ep 1727
6 See Ep 2011 and cf Ep 2110:1.
7 Literally 'the finishing line of my ambition.' See *Adagia* IV v 46.

he attracted the favourable attention of the imperial court, which was then at Bologna, and gave his pledge to accept appointment to a future vacancy on the Reichskammergericht (imperial law court) in Germany. Leaving Italy in the autumn of 1533, Viglius accepted appointments as the official (chief legal officer) of the bishopric of Münster (1534–5), assessor of the Reichskammergericht in Speyer (1535–7), and professor of law at Ingolstadt (1537–42). Along the way, he produced important works of legal scholarship, including an edition of Theophilus Antecessor (see Ep 1991 n5). Meanwhile, in 1540 he had entered the service of Charles V, who in May 1543 appointed him to the grand council of Mechelen. From that point on until the end of his life, Viglius served the Hapsburg government of the Netherlands as a leading counsellor and diplomat.

Viglius is first mentioned in Erasmus' correspondence in a letter of November 1528 to Haio Cammingha, who was Viglius' friend and fellow student at Dôle (Ep 2073:81). It is the present letter, written while Viglius was still at Dôle, that successfully inaugurated the friendly correspondence between them that lasted until Erasmus' death.

VIGLIUS ZUICHEMUS OF FRIESLAND TO ERASMUS, GREETING

Most learned Erasmus, among your many splendid virtues, any one of which by itself would bring you immortality, I particularly admire your unmatched learning and the kindness you show to everyone. The first has caused the whole world to bring Latin literature back, as it were, from exile, the second daily kindles and inspires within me the hope that, though I crawl upon the ground and am dazzled by the majesty of your learning as though struck by the rays of the sun, yet I may dare to hope to be received into your circle of acquaintances. A man of your exceptional kindliness can hardly think such ambition on my part a sin. And since in your generosity you bring delight and honour to so many, why should I too not aspire to your friendship? And given my devotion to learning, why should I not honour you, the father of humane learning ? Why should a young man like me not win the respect of the old and venerable by some devoted service? Why, finally, should I believe that the expression of my feelings for you would be unwelcome?

It is true, venerable Erasmus, that right from my childhood I have felt so close to you that nothing has propelled me more strongly towards learning than the thought that if I made sufficient progress, I might work my way into your good graces; and even if I have not yet reached that goal, I am fired every day with such regard for you and have such confidence in your generosity that, despite my resolution, I have not been able to curb my presumptuous cheek in writing to you. Or rather, you should put the blame

Viglius Zuichemus
Frans Pourbus the Elder, 1571
Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels
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on Polyphemus,[1] who has been so warm in his praise of you that I am venturing to approach the sacred shrine of the Muses, plodding peasant though I am. Or if you like, blame Karel Sucket,[2] a young man fully worthy of your affection, whose encouragement has bolstered my audacity. Grant me at least this reward for my loyal devotion – a pardon for this one tactless letter.

I would prefer to have sown the seeds of friendship by talking to you in person before writing to you from a distance. But the present disturbances in Basel are standing in the way of my wishes.[3] I shall count myself blessed if some day I can see you. Not only has this been my fondest wish for a long time, but I have often been prodded in this direction by my uncle. His name was Bernard Bucho, dean of The Hague, who supported me with great generosity throughout my studies. Recently he departed this life, and the sad news of his death affected me deeply.[4] In his will, however, he made generous provision for my education. I would like you to know how much he loved you, how loyally he defended you against those hornets who are madly attacking you. So because of him I felt more confident of your kindness. But such is the courtesy that you show towards everyone that there is no need for the support of others: your own nature drives and impels you to return the love of those who are devoted to you.

So I am sure, most learned Erasmus, that you will be kind enough to accept this letter of mine, in which I could not help telling you what I feel about you. To be frank, I could no longer hold myself back from writing and expressing my feelings, as soon as I saw a letter of yours and learned of the shameless and unprincipled behaviour of that rogue H.E.[5] (We read the letter together, Karel and I, along with a large group of Erasmophiles).[6] I have often stood up for you against Lu. Ca.[7] If he had been willing to take my advice, he would, of his own free will, have returned to the way

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2101

1 Felix Rex, nicknamed Polyphemus (Epp 2068 n1, 2130), who was in Erasmus' service as famulus and letter-carrier. He had recently carried letters to Besançon and Dôle (Ep 2112:32–8).

2 Ep 2191

3 The disturbances were the iconoclastic violence of 8–10 February that accompanied the introduction of the Reformation; see Ep 2097 n1.

4 Bernard Bucho von Aytta (Ep 1237) died on 3 December 1528.

5 Heinrich Eppendorf

6 There is no extant letter from Erasmus to Karel Sucket (line 26 above) that would fit the context here, but perhaps Sucket had acquired a copy of one or the other of Epp 1934, 1991–2. For the term 'Erasmophiles,' cf Ep 1858:537–8.

7 Ludovicus Carinus (Ep 2111 n2).

and so avoided his present trouble and disgrace. So let him meet the fate of Lucius Catilina,[8] and since he wishes it so, let his name be added to the list of monsters whom your pen will make known to all posterity.

I beg you, most learned Erasmus, not to let the poisonous ranting of beasts like that make you doubt the warmth of my regard for you. I count as my enemy anyone who wishes you ill. I do not say this in the hope of squeezing a letter out of you, for I have never dared to hope for such a reward. My only purpose is to make you understand the extent of my affection and to assure you that I am ready to do all in my power to protect you from the mad fury of shameless nobodies and assure you the peace and quiet so necessary for your work. Farewell, Erasmus, the peerless glory of our age.

From Dôle, 15 February 1529

2102 / From Martinus Bovolinus Sondrio, 15 February 1529

The autograph of this letter was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It was first published as Ep 97 in Förstemann/Günther.

Martinus Bovolinus (d 1531) belonged to a prominent family of the Mesolcina valley, which lay in the territory of the Three Leagues that later became the Swiss canton of Graubünden (Grisons). A doctor of laws, he was a notary in his home town of Mesocco, but he is also known to have gone on diplomatic missions to Venice, Rome, and Milan on behalf of the Leagues. In 1529 he resided at Sondrio while acting as representative of the leagues in the Valtelline. In March 1531 he was murdered by agents of Gian Giacomo de' Medici, who was trying to establish his rule in the Valtelline. Meanwhile, at the end of June 1530, Bovolinus had written to Erasmus at Freiburg, asking him to take his son Lazarus into his home and service (Ep 2337).

JESUS CHRIST

TO THAT ILLUSTRIOUS CHRISTIAN DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM FROM MARTINUS BOVOLINUS, CORDIAL GREETINGS

O shining light of Germany, where are you hiding? I believe you have turned your back on the people of this wretched age, content with the ripeness of your own great soul. But can I really say that Erasmus is hiding, when he can be seen in the famous city of Basel? Well, I shall say it just the same, for such is the glory of your illustrious name throughout all Italy, not to

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8 Catiline, the Roman demagogue whose conspiracy was crushed by Cicero

mention the rest of the world, and (if I may say so) so great is the painful bewilderment of all good Christians at the religious divisions in that famous city, and so derisive the laughter of the indifferent, that every decent person must wonder why Erasmus does not flee these tumults and move to a safer and more tranquil place.[1]

But you will say, 'It is a thankless task to involve oneself, unbidden, in the affairs of others.' Would anyone who tries to advise Erasmus on Erasmus' business not seem a fool, for it is from him that the whole world receives advice on earthly and heavenly matters alike – if only they would listen to what he says! But don't be surprised, good Erasmus: this is our business, more than yours, for we know that your poor body, which has been the prison-house of an excellent mind, is approaching the frailties of old age, and we cannot doubt that, in the perfection of your wisdom, you are panting for the water brooks of our creator and longing to know face to face what you have known darkly.[2] But, my dear Erasmus, you must forgive us if we hope you will be with us in this world for a long time and put your value to Christendom ahead of your personal desires. Relying on the grace of our Saviour, we pray that however long you live, the increase in your fame and the further services you will provide will outweigh the burdens of old age.

So look after yourself both for your own sake and for ours, and find a safer place for your old age. Have no fear: wherever you go, unless you travel to the Antipodes, you will never be a stranger. Let us pray to our good and mighty God that he will deliver that great city from turmoil, bring the rebellious back to the faith, and teach all men, in unity, not just to be Catholic, but truly to practise the Catholic faith; or else let him snatch you from that place and keep you safe and happy somewhere else. Farewell, great glory of the age. I hope you will think your humble servant worthy of a few lines in reply.[3]

From Sondrio, 15 February 1529

JESUS CHRIST

To Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, most distinguished of men. In Basel

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2102

1 News of the iconoclastic tumults on 8–9 February can scarcely have reached Sondrio, but Bovolinus could well have heard reports of the disorders of late December–early January. See Ep 2097 n1.

2 1 Cor 13:12

3 Erasmus sent a reply (see Allen Ep 2337:23–5), but it is not extant.

2103 / To Tielmannus Gravius

Basel, 20 February 1529

This is the preface to Lactantius' *De opificio Dei*, which was appended to *De vidua christiana* (Ep 2100). The presentation copy was delivered by Felix Rex (Ep 2130:56–8), who reported the disappointment of Hartmann Moer at not having been the dedicatee (Ep 2130:97–100).

On Tielmannus Gravius, secretary of the Cologne cathedral chapter, personage of some consequence at the court of Archbishop Hermann von Wied (Ep 1976), and faithful friend of Erasmus, see Epp 610:50n, 1829, 1865, 2068.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE HONOURABLE TIELMANNUS GRAVIUS, OR VON GRABEN, GREETING

You are always challenging me, dear Tielmannus, most generous of friends, with little gifts of honey and sweetmeats, but even more by your kindly thoughts, which, as your letters show, are more honeyed than any honey and sweeter than any sweetmeat. So, not to seem ungrateful, I am sending you in return a lacteous gift,[1] a little work by Firmianus Lactantius known as *De opificio Dei* or *On the Formation of Man*.[2] It was composed for Demetrianus, a former pupil of his in rhetoric, who went on to work in the service of the state, and it was to this same man that he addressed two books of letters, unfortunately not extant. I devoted several days to the work. With the help of the Aldine edition and a very old manuscript I removed many errors, several of which, as you will see, could not have been restored simply by conjecture. I added short notes to each chapter.[3]

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2103

1 The Latin is *lacteum*, meaning something 'milky' or 'pure,' a somewhat strained pun on the name Lactantius.

2 Lactantius (c 240–c 320) was a pagan rhetorician who, after his conversion to Christianity, wrote apologetic works in a deliberately Ciceronian style, which endeared him to Renaissance humanists. *De opificio Dei* was an attempt to prove the existence of God on the basis of the marvels of the human body.

3 It appears that Erasmus' edition of the work was based on his own copy of a manuscript from the eighth or ninth century that he had borrowed from Willem Bollart, the abbot of St Amand near Tournai, while he was still living at Louvain (c 1517–18). Having had, for some reason or other, to lay the work aside, he now took it up again in order to add a bit of weight to the slender volume containing *De vidua christiana*. In so doing, he did not finish the notes, which are not many and which cease altogether at chapter 11 (out of 21). For details, see Allen's introduction.

What I have undertaken is a task for the young. I wish that the same could be done for all authors worth reading by those who are best fitted for the task by leisure, age, vigour of mind, and varied and extensive reading. When you have read it, you can calculate whether I have matched your delicious gifts. I know that even with all the riches of Croesus I could not equal the singular and snow-white purity of your heart, though I am not ready to take second place to you in good intentions; for in a competition of that sort, while it is a disgrace to be defeated, no one is defeated unless he wishes to be defeated. It will be up to you to conform to your old character by accepting this little gift, for you will demonstrate the same generosity in graciously accepting this small token of my great good will towards you as you showed in the past by challenging me with so many kindnesses, undeserving though I was. Best wishes to you and your dear wife and darling children.

Basel, 20 February 1529

2104 / From Antonio Hoyos de Salamanca [Freiburg], 21 February 1529

This is Hoyos' reply to Ep 2098. Erasmus responded with a letter that is not extant (Ep 2118:5–6). First published as Ep 98 in Förstemann/Günther, the autograph of this letter was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). As Allen noted, 'the youthful Bishop's handwriting is good, but his spelling is unusual.'

In answer to your kind etc. Dear sir, the wisest and most distinguished of men, I now have evidence of your great affection for me. Every day I see you showing a more solicitous interest in my affairs. So I could never hope to pay you fitting thanks.[1] But all that a good friend can do, that I promise will be done, and with no long delay.

As for the tutor I am hoping for, I am afraid that since the celebrated Amerbach is a married man, he will not wish to burden himself[2] with this

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2104

1 Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 1.600.

2 Given the virtual impossibility of Erasmus' having recommended Bonifacius Amerbach (or indeed Henricus Glareanus; see n3 below) as Hoyos' tutor, and given also the strong evidence that he had in fact recommended Peter Bitterlin (Ep 2098 n3), this reference to Amerbach (as well as that to Glareanus) is a puzzle. One can only surmise that in letters no longer extant something was said to Hoyos that he misunderstood and that the misunderstanding had been cleared up by the time Erasmus explained (in Ep 2118:16–17) that he had not known that the person recommended, 'Peter [Bitterlin],' was married.

task, and the same goes for Glareanus.[3] I would like someone who can reside here. However, through the efforts of Amelius,[4] I think I have discovered just what I want; the man is in orders and lives at Waldkirch.[5] He is interested in learning and could make use of the university here;[6] at the same time, in obliging me, he could earn, along with his salary, my gratitude and good will. I think he will come very soon. No terms have been agreed with him as yet, but we do not need a complex agreement. Master Amelius will decide what is appropriate. As for the distinguished men you mentioned, I shall always admire them and from time to time make use of their labours.

I have nothing to add, except that the final words of your letter, hinting that you will come here shortly, gave me the greatest pleasure imaginable.[7] I hope you will be able to carry out your plan and fulfill my most cherished wish. This, in my judgment, would be the safer and better course – though being a mere youth, I shall be teased for taking the liberty of lending advice to the wisest of men and giving him the benefit of my counsel. The climate here is healthy and pleasant. If you try it, you will have no regrets. Farewell, and do spare a thought for me.

Reminiscere Sunday[8] 1529

I have given the courier his pay; there is no reason for him to expect anything from you too. This is my only reason for mentioning the matter, though it is of little importance. Don't hesitate to let me know if some good scholar turns up.

Your devoted friend who is always ready to serve you,
Antonio Salamanca, bishop-elect of Gurk

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3 Hoyos calls him 'clarianus.' Glareanus was indeed about to settle in Freiburg (Ep 2098 n1), but he was no more likely a candidate for the job of domestic tutor than was Amerbach.

4 Ep 2096. Here and in line 14 Hoyos calls him 'emelius.'

5 In the Eltztal, c 16 km north-east of Freiburg

6 Allen speculated that this might have been Ambrosius Pelargus (Ep 2169), who had abandoned Basel for Freiburg at the end of January 1529 and would enter the university on 3 March. But Pelargus was a theologian with no obvious qualification for tutoring anyone in law.

7 These 'final words' are not found in the version of the letter published in the *Opus epistolarum*. Cf Ep 2098 introduction.

8 Reminiscere (Hoyos spells it 'Remeniscere') is the second Sunday in Lent, so called from the opening words of the introit for that day, 'Reminiscere, Domine.' In 1529 Easter was on 28 March, which means that Reminiscere Sunday fell on 21 February.

To the most learned and erudite Master Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, doctor of the sacred page and his deeply respected friend. In Basel

2105 / To Giambattista Egnazio Basel, 21 February 1529

On Egnazio (1478–1553), the eminent Venetian humanist whom Erasmus had known and admired since his year at the Aldine Press in 1507–8, see Epp 269:56n, 588, 648, 1594 n20, 1626 n18, 1707. Egnazio was the only Italian scholar on the list of those in Erasmus' first will (1527) to be given a specially bound copy of his complete *Opera* (CWE 12 545). Erasmus seems never to have abandoned his view, expressed in the *Ciceronianus*, that Egnazio deserved admiration for his 'uprightness and integrity as well as [his] erudition and eloquence' (CWE 28 419). For his part, Egnazio was one of the few Italian intellectuals who never abandoned their admiration for Erasmus.

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO GIAMBATTISTA EGNAZIO, GREETING

The person who, I hope, will deliver this letter is a young man of impeccable character, Karel Uutenhove, a native of Ghent, who has been a tried and trusted member of my household for some time.[1] He has been drawn to take the long and hazardous road to Italy by his thirst for learning and his eagerness for the company and conversation of men like yourself, whom he venerates as gods.[2] He will tell you what is going on in this city; you will hear the story of a strange and singular calamity.[3] If some problem should arise, please give this young man your support. You can do this at no, or very little, cost to yourself, for he is not in need of money.

My *Ciceronianus* is causing offence to some people in Paris;[4] they have even gone so far as to attack me with defamatory epigrams. Our friend Lascaris is said to have joined the critics because I compared Budé with Bade.[5] Some think that I am trying to discourage young people from imitating Cicero, while in fact, right at the beginning of my preface, I make it clear that

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2105

1 Uutenhove (Ep 2093) had joined Erasmus' household in late July 1528; see Ep 2015:14–15.

2 He was accompanied on his journey by Andrzej Zebrzydowski; see Ep 2173:13–22.

3 Ie the iconoclastic violence of 8–9 February; see Epp 2097 n1, 2101 n3.

4 On the *Ciceronianus* and the hostile reaction to it in France, see Epp 1948, 2021.

5 Janus Lascaris was the principal author of the 'defamatory epigrams'; see Ep 2027:27–8. For another see Ep 2119.

Guillaume Budé
Detail of a portrait of Francis I with his children and advisers (see CWE 14 xv)
French School
Musée Condé, Chantilly

such a course would be totally insane and that my only target is those who pedantically and clumsily try to reproduce every feature of Cicero's style.[6] This new plague has descended on the devotees of humane letters so that there should never be a moment's peace in the affairs of men.

I hope you are in the best of health, my dearest Egnazio. I only wish I could be among you either to live out the remaining days that heaven is pleased to grant me, or to die in peace.[7]

Basel, 21 February 1529

Beatus Rhenanus,[8] Bonifacius Amerbach, and Henricus Glareanus send their greetings. Yesterday Glareanus left here and moved, bag and baggage, to Freiburg.[9]

2106 / To Pietro Bembo

Basel, 22 February [1529]

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. The autograph received by Bembo is in the Vatican library (MS Barb Lat 2158 fol 177). The date in line 23 has to be corrected to 1529 to accommodate the reference in lines 2–3 to Ep 2074 of 20 November 1528.

After receiving a thorough training as a classical scholar, the Venetian aristocrat Pietro Bembo (1470–1547) demonstrated the quality of his philological skills in the editions of Petrarch (*Rime*) and Dante (*Commedia divina*) that he prepared for the Aldine press. After several years at the ducal court in Urbino (1506–12), he departed for Rome, where in 1513 Pope Leo X appointed him and his friend Jacopo Sadoleto (Ep 2059) to the office of personal secretary in the apostolic secretariat. In 1521 Bembo retired to his villa near Padua and there entered upon a new period of intense intellectual activity. In 1530 he became librarian and historian of the Venetian republic, in which capacity he produced the history of Venice (*Historiae Venetae libri xxi*) that was published posthumously by the Aldine press in 1551. Meanwhile, having been ordained in 1522, Bembo was created cardinal in 1539.

A favourable reference to Bembo in *Adagia* II i 1 (CWE 33 5) indicates that when Erasmus was at the Aldine press in 1508 he already knew of the Italian

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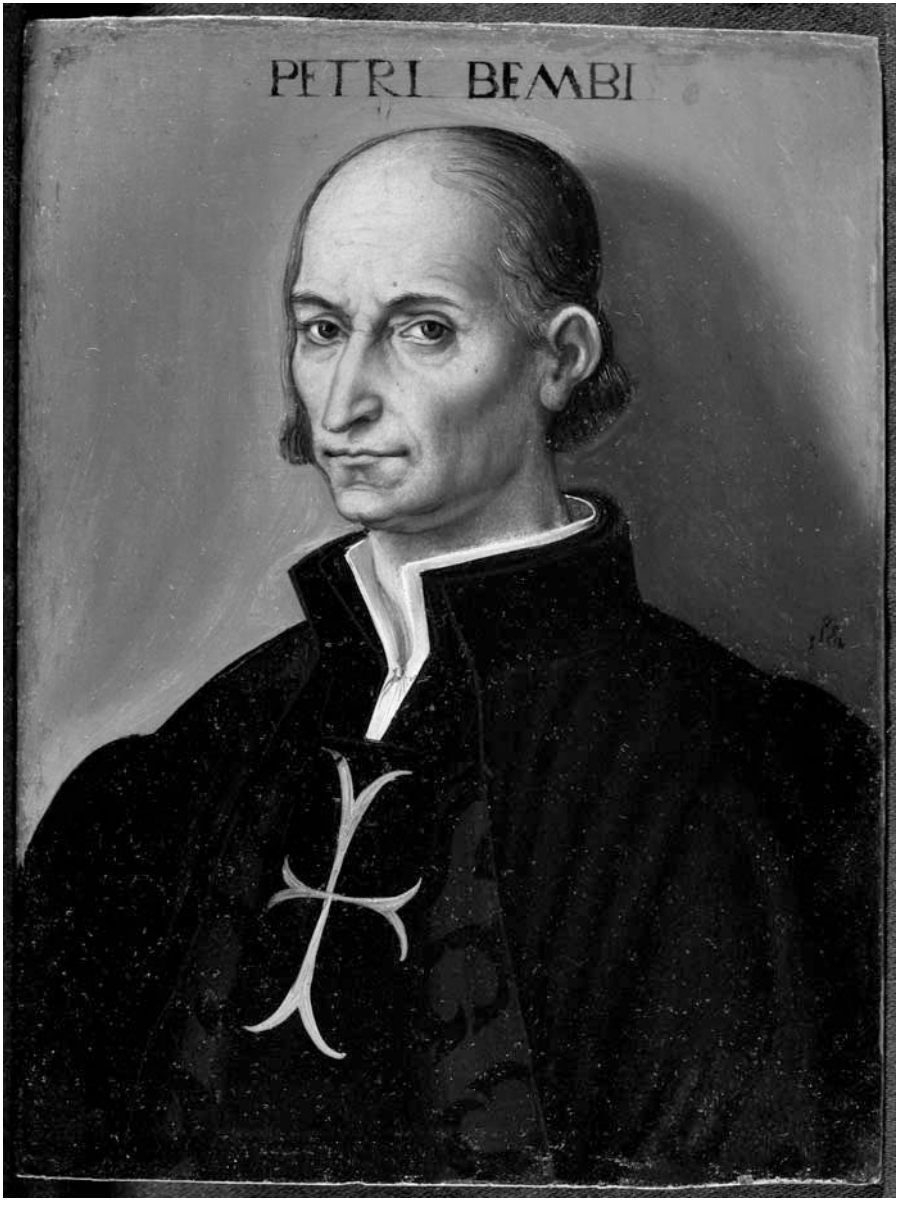
6 See Ep 1948:42–7.

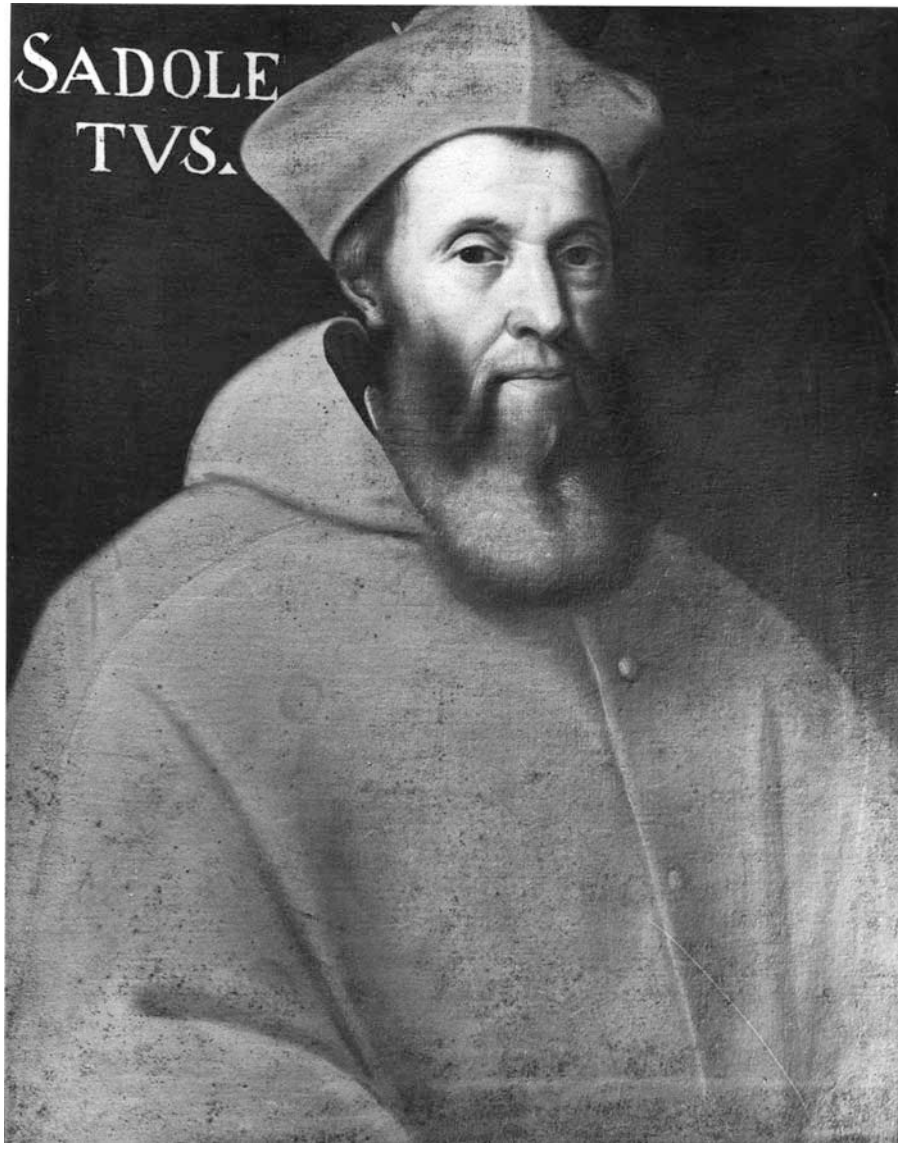
7 On this yearning for Italy, cf Allen Ep 2328:54–5.

8 Rhenanus (Ep 327), humanist, editor, historian, and one of Erasmus' closest friends. Resident in Basel from 1511, he had by 1527 settled permanently in his native Sélestat. As this reference and many others in the correspondence indicate, however, he maintained his contacts in Basel and visited there frequently.

9 See Ep 2098 n1.



Pietro Bembo
Lucas Cranach the Younger
Private collection
Image courtesy of P. and D. Colnaghi and Co



Jacopo Sadoleto
Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan

scholar's intellectual accomplishments. But he manifested no real interest in Bembo (see Epp 1594 n17, 1626:49–50) until 1528, when he reported to Sadoleto that reading Bembo's correspondence with Christophe de Longueil had caused him to 'to esteem and admire Bembo with greater intensity' (Ep 2059:18–20.) He found the Ciceronianism of Bembo, like that of Sadoleto, to be free of the kind of slavish imitation practised by the uninspired Ciceronians whom he pilloried in the *Ciceronianus* (see CWE 28 435–6). Moreover, after the appearance of the first edition of the *Ciceronianus*, Erasmus became aware of the published debate between Bembo and Gianfrancesco Pico della Mirandola on the subject of the imitation of Cicero, where he discovered that Bembo's view of the matter was not materially different from his own (see Ep 2088:123–31).

This letter and Bembo's cordial reply to it (Ep 2144) mark the commencement of an increasingly warm epistolary relationship between the two men, who never met in person.

Cordial greetings. A nagging worry was lifted from my mind, dear Bembo, my estimable friend, by a recent letter from the reverend bishop Jacopo Sadoleto,[1] in which he indicated that, long before that storm blew up in Rome,[2] you had escaped to the tranquil haven of Padua and were enjoying a most honourable and pleasant retreat. Sadoleto too deserved the same good fortune; it would be fitting for two men of one mind to find the same tranquillity. But heaven decided otherwise.[3] Sadoleto thinks, however, that he made a good bargain with fortune in purchasing his safety at the cost of all his resources, the dearest and most precious of which was his library.[4]

Here we are battered by storms no gentler than those at Rome. The turmoil there caused the seizure of wealth; here we are robbed of things that are, and ought to be, more prized by pious men than money.[5] But I would rather you heard the sad tale from the courier. He is Karel Uutenhove, a young man who has been for some time a member of my household,[6] so I have got to know him very well. I have not met anyone for years who is

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2106

1 Ep 2074
2 Ie the sack of Rome by the troops of Charles V in May 1527
3 Virgil *Aeneid* 2.428
4 See Ep 2059 n8.
5 Reference again to the recent iconoclasm that accompanied the introduction of the Reformation at Basel; see Ep 2097 n1.
6 Ep 2093

more sincere or modest or a better friend. He has been drawn to Italy by a love of learning and an ambition to meet and embrace men like yourself. So I ask you to do what I know you would do anyway and, with your usual kindness, provide him with whatever he needs by way of counsel or influence – for he does not need money. What I am asking will not cause you any inconvenience. I hope you are in the best of form.

Basel, 22 February 1528[7]

I, Erasmus of Rotterdam, a great admirer of your talents, wrote this with my own hand.

To the honourable Master Pietro Bembo. In Padua

2107 / To Bernhard von Cles Basel, 24 February 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Bernhard von Cles, bishop of Trent and King Ferdinand's trusted adviser (Epp 1357, 2007), was with Ferdinand at the imperial diet in Speyer, which had been summoned for 21 February. The letter was delivered to him in Speyer by Felix Rex (Ep 2130:51–3).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO BERNHARD, BISHOP OF TRENT, GREETING

I hope, reverend bishop, that this celebrated diet will deliver us from our present turmoil and bring us the peace we have so long hoped for, and that the Lord will prosper what his serene Majesty, King Ferdinand of Hungary and Bohemia, is doing with what I believe to be godly zeal.[1]

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7 1529 is the correct date; see introduction.

2107

1 Erasmus' hopes for the diet and for Ferdinand's statesmanship were to be disappointed. During Charles V's absence from Germany (1521–30), the imperial diet (*Reichstag*) refused to enforce the Edict of Worms (1521), which had outlawed Luther, his writings, and his followers. Instead, the diet repeatedly postponed definitive settlement of the religious question until the convocation of either a national council or a general council 'in German lands.' The culmination of this policy was the recess of the diet held at Speyer in 1526, which declared that, pending the decision of a council, the estates of the Empire should act with respect to the enforcement of the Edict of Worms 'as each hopes and trusts to justify before God and his imperial Majesty.' Although the Catholic princes intended this as a stopgap measure to give them time to get organized to deal with the spread of heresy, the evangelical princes and

A man of your good sense can readily guess what my situation is.[2] It is not that I fear any action from the authorities against me, but in this city there is a large element from the dregs of society. I have many enemies and some friends, but in the present state of things the influence of my friends does not count for much. Here is what I would like: could my friends arrange for his serene Majesty, King Ferdinand, to send me a letter and summon me from this place on the pretext that he needs me to do him some service? I hope I can leave here freely,[3] and I have no obligations towards anyone; nevertheless, such an arrangement would make me more secure about the move. There is no place I would rather go than Speyer, but with all the noisy disagreements among the leaders I do not think it would suit me in the present state of my health.

Freiburg is within easy reach, but it is a rather poor place and the people, I hear, are inclined to be narrow-minded. For a long time now the 'scaly tribe'[4] has not agreed with me: if I swallow even a mouthful, I am sick to death. Although I have better reason for not fasting than I would wish and have from the popes an official and unequivocal letter,[5] yet there would be howls of protest from the ignorant mob, who sin as much by their

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cities interpreted it as sanction in law for the organization in their territories of evangelical churches independent of the authority of the Catholic hierarchy. Outraged by this 'misinterpretation' of the recess of 1526, and alarmed by the rapid institutionalization of heresy that it was used to justify, the Catholic majority at the new diet in 1529, under the leadership of King Ferdinand as regent for his brother, adopted a recess that condemned the evangelical interpretation of the recess of 1526 and forbade all further religious 'innovations' pending a council. Arguing that religious rights enshrined in law could not be abrogated by the mere will of the majority, a number of the evangelical estates (five princes and fourteen cities) lodged a formal protest against the recess, thus becoming known as 'the protesting estates,' or 'protestants' for short. In this context, the ultimate outcome of the diet in 1529 would be the formation of the Protestant League of Schmalkalden (1530–1) for the purpose of the armed defence of the Protestant estates should the emperor make war on them because of their religion. For good measure, the diet dealt with the threat of Anabaptism by reaffirming the provision of Roman law that imposed the death penalty on 'rebaptizers.'

2 Ie his situation in a city in which the Reformation was being introduced to the accompaniment of tumult; see Ep 2097 n1.

3 Erasmus' worries on this score would prove groundless.

4 A humorous periphrasis for 'fish,' adapted from Plautus *Rudens* 942

5 See Epp 1079:6–8, 1353:63–4, 1542.

narrow legalism as the other side sins by their arrogant disobedience. It is a graver fault to condemn a neighbour who is compelled by necessity to avoid the fast and is supported by the authority of the supreme pontiff than to condemn a man who, of his own will, refuses to fast.

These considerations have kept me here longer. Otherwise I might have taken no notice of winter. In this matter I beg you, out of your great kindness, to give me the benefit of your help and advice. My best wishes for your continued success.

Basel, 24 February 1529

I am sending you the first pages of my little book *On the Christian Widow*.[6] Someone asked me to dedicate it to her serene Majesty, Mary, the former queen of Hungary, and I have done so.[7] I have hesitated to obtrude on the time of her brother,[8] who, I can well imagine, is fully occupied with a host of matters. I am his Majesty's most devoted servant, and will continue to be so as long as there is breath in my body.[9]

2108 / To Haio Herman Basel, 25 February 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. On Haio Herman, who had now embarked on an administrative career in his native Friesland, see Epp 903:14n, 1131, 1479, and 1978.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HAIO HERMAN OF FRIESLAND, GREETING

I am returning your codex, which, as you say in your letter, is an exceptionally handsome volume,[1] and along with it I am sending two copies from the press.[2] My contract allows me three: so you are getting the greater share. If your codex was worth fifty florins, the printed text is worth a thousand.[3]

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6 Ep 2100
7 The request came from Johann Henckel; see Ep 2011:43–55.
8 King Ferdinand
9 Virgil *Aeneid* 4.336

2108
1 Erasmus had borrowed from Haio a copy of the Treviso Seneca annotated by Rodolphus Agricola; see Epp 2056:4–6 and 36–8, 2091:115–25. Haio's letter is not extant.
2 Ie two copies of the new edition of Seneca (Ep 2091)
3 Hardly a real price. The meaning is doubtless that the new edition marked a huge improvement over the first.

I do not deny, however, that it was useful in several places. Rodolphus, I believe, has not been robbed of his proper praise.[4] You too are mentioned in the preface,[5] and I have added your name to the *Ciceronianus*.[6] If you think this is still not satisfactory, I shall fulfil my undertaking at my own expense; for now that Johann Froben is dead, the whole organization of the business has changed.

I have living with me a Frisian with the same first and third name as you except that his surname is Cammingha.[7] I am surprised you have not taken a different third name to make it easy to distinguish you from others. Your friend, the prince of Carpi,[8] has published his book in Paris.[9] He would have served his reputation better if he had suppressed it. I spent six days writing a reply.[10] What began as a trivial matter is ending in madness. Farewell, dear Herman, and never lose your affection for your friend Erasmus.

Basel, 25 February 1529

2109 / From Alfonso de Valdés Toledo, 25 February 1529

The manuscript of this letter, an autograph rough draft, is in the Real Academia de la Historia at Madrid (MS Est 18 gr 1.5 fol 87). It was first published in Caballero 414.

Alfonso de Valdés (Ep 1807) was Latin secretary to Charles V and 'imperial secretary' to the imperial chancellor Mercurino Gattinara (Epp 1150, 1643). The most enthusiastic supporter of Erasmus at the imperial court, Valdés was an influence for moderation in the religious controversies of the time. He had,

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4 Ep 2091:120–2
5 Ep 2091:123–5
6 Ursinus Velius had chided Erasmus for omitting Haio's name from the *Ciceronianus*, to which Erasmus responded that it seemed pointless to mention someone who had not yet published anything; see Epp 2008:26–9, 2056:27–30. Nonetheless, he inserted Haio's name into the second edition, describing him as 'a young man of almost divine ability' who 'may possibly manage to win the title [of Ciceronian] if he displays industry to match his natural gifts' (CWE 28 426). Haio seems in fact never to have published anything.
7 See Ep 2073. Cammingha was known as Haio Cammingha Phrysius ('the Frisian'), just as Herman was known as Haio Herman Phrysius.
8 Alberto Pio (Ep 2080). Erasmus' choice of words, *tuus Carpensis* (repeated in Allen Ep 2261:69), seems to indicate that while studying in Italy (Ep 1479) Haio had met Pio and formed some sort of connection with him.
9 The *Responsio paraenetica*, published in January 1529; see Ep 2080 n1.
10 The *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii*, published in March 1529; see Ep 2080 n4.

for example, urged Erasmus to exercise moderation in his controversy with the Spanish religious orders (Ep 1907).

Cordial greetings. Dear Erasmus, my distinguished friend, I have received two letters from you, one dated 27 July, the other 31 August, both sent in two copies.[1] In the first you recommended Frans van der Dilft to me and asked that he be received into the emperor's court.[2] You could hardly believe how distressed I was not to be able to help this excellent young man.[3] But everything is so tight with us that one can look after only the essential members of one's staff, especially since we are now preparing an expedition into Italy and are ready for the road.[4] Since we hear that thousands of people in that country are dying of hunger,[5] everyone, far from wanting to increase the number of their dependants, is making reductions. The chancellor would most willingly have received the man into his household as a gesture to you,[6] but he has contracted heavy debts here – something not infrequent with men like him – and has been constantly badgering the emperor to assist him with a gift so that he can satisfy his creditors and support his household, and all he hears from the emperor is that he should cut down his expenses; so he would not dare increase them by new appointments. He might, nonetheless, have spurned such advice as a favour to you, had he seen what benefit the court could be to Dilft. But since there was no advantage, nothing but a host of disadvantages, we all advised him to return home. To tell you the truth, I don't know what you meant by sending this unfortunate young man to us, especially since he is not familiar with any language that is in use here. But whatever the situation, the chancellor is truly sorry, and so am I, that we were unable to meet your request as we hoped and would have liked, and we beg your forgiveness.

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2109

1 Neither letter is extant. The first was sent with Ep 2013 to Gattinara. On the second, cf Ep 2039:2; accompanying it was probably a copy of the *Concionalis interpretatio ... in psalmum 85* (Ep 2017), at the end of which was printed Ep 2018 to Valdés.

2 On Dilft and his journey to Spain in search of employment, see Epp 1663 introduction, 2026:9–11, 2063:52–7.

3 Cf the description of Dilft in lines 21–2 below.

4 By now conditions in Italy were sufficiently stable that the emperor could travel there to deal personally with Pope Clement. The imperial party, including Valdés, made its way slowly to Barcelona (Ep 2163 nn4, 7), whence it embarked on 28 July, landing at Genoa on 12 August 1529 (Ep 2193 n14).

5 Cf Epp 2115:68, Allen Ep 2285:46–7.

6 Erasmus had also written a letter of introduction for Dilft to chancellor Gattinara (Ep 2013).

There is no reason for you to be anxious about the attitude of the archbishop of Toledo,[7] for he is truly very fond of you, and will be delighted to have something dedicated to him by Erasmus.[8] He wrote to you and sent a promissory note for two hundred ducats to be paid to you.[9] That has already been sent in a third copy. The Welsers tell me that thirty florins have been paid to you on my account.[10] This was not sent to you as a personal gift, but as a subsidy for Augustine – I did not want you to imagine I was courting your favour with gifts of money.

The monks are keeping quiet. They do not dare open their mouths, having seen how much harm their recent agitation did them.[11] Peace is asleep – no, not asleep; rather I should have said that peace is in its grave. The princes have been roused to a state of fury and are constantly enraged by new insults.[12] There is a story that the Roman pontiff is coming to us to make peace between the princes. But I do not think he will undertake so daunting a task, and even if he does, I cannot see how he can settle their differences, unless God himself intervenes.[13]

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7 Alonso de Fonseca (Ep 1748). As Allen suggests, Erasmus may have heard an early report of the remark by Fonseca that Luis de Carvajal subsequently quoted in his *Apologia* (Ep 2110 n10): 'If Erasmus is a heretic, let him burn' (LB X 1679B). Heard out of context, it was not clear that the remark was made as a rebuke to those who were accusing Erasmus of heresy. See Bataillon 351–2.

8 It would appear that Erasmus had written to ask permission to dedicate the Froben Augustine (Ep 2157) to Fonseca. Cf Epp 2003:38–44, 2004:38–41; and see also Epp 2126:192–5, 2133:58–9, 2163, 2198.

9 The Latin word translated 'promisory note' is *syngrapha*, for which the English equivalent is the archaic word 'chirograph,' a term applied loosely to a variety of handwritten documents. In some contexts, as here, it refers specifically to what was known in English as a 'bill obligatory,' a holographic document equivalent to the modern promissory note. Valdés is referring to the *syngrapha* for 200 ducats that Fonseca sent to Erasmus in 1528. See Epp 2003:94–5 with n6, which explains the value of the gift, and 2004:40; on the current exchange rates cf also Epp 1934 n51 and 2153 n4. Now, to collect the money, Erasmus had to supply other kinds of documents that were also referred to as *syngraphae*; see Epp 2126:187–9 with n45 and 229–32 with n56, 2153 n2, 2163 n5, 2196 n36.

10 On the banking house of Welser, see Ep 2153. The thirty florins may have been the Hapsburg money-of-account (worth 40d groot Flemish), rather than the Rhenish or Italian gold coins. For the money-of-account, see Ep 1934 n6.

11 On this 'recent agitation,' see Ep 2094.

12 The princes were Charles V and Francis I.

13 On 10 January, Pope Clement, lying ill at the Vatican, had declared that if he recovered, he would go to Spain to restore peace to Christendom. See Pastor 10 40.

I do not know if you have caused offence in the royal court in Hungary by your overzealous advocacy of peace.[14] You have certainly won our gratitude for that, although here we have experienced practically none of the hardships of war. The expedition to Italy has for me its compensations, since it holds the prospect of seeing you some day in person; either you will come to us or I shall visit you in Basel.[15] Farewell.

Toledo, 25 February 1529

2110 / To Johann Henckel

Basel, 26 February 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. On Johann Henckel, court preacher and confessor to Queen Mary of Hungary and ardent admirer of Erasmus, see Ep 1672; and see also Epp 2011, 2100.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANN HENCKEL, GREETING

Of your four letters three have reached me,[1] my dearest friend in the Lord. When I realized that you had set your heart on the matter (and not without reason), I did what you wanted, though somewhat reluctantly, because the subject is neither simple nor straightforward.[2] Then the portrayal of a model widow seems hardly appropriate for one who, I imagine, is destined for marriage;[3] nor does it seem right to produce a work of consolation for a lady so blessed, especially so long after the event.[4] I have, therefore, varied

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14 At Ferdinand's court in Hungary, under severe pressure from John Zápolyai, Ferdinand's rival for the kingship of Hungary, who was in alliance with the advancing Turks, Erasmus' constant exhortations to peace may have caused some annoyance. Erasmus himself was aware that no one had paid much attention to them. See Ep 2201:90–2.

15 Following 'the expedition to Italy' (see n4 above), Valdés proceeded with the imperial court to Germany, where he attended the Diet of Augsburg in 1530. He remained with the imperial court in Germany and the Netherlands for the next two years and died of the plague at Vienna. He and Erasmus continued to correspond, but they never met in person.

2110

1 One of these was Ep 2011. Cf Ep Allen 2762:20–2, where Erasmus sets the number of letters at 'six,' which was often his word for 'several.'

2 Ie the topic of *De vidua christiana*, which Henckel had urgently requested him to write and to dedicate to Queen Mary; cf Ep 2011:43–52.

3 Cf Ep 2118:36–8. But Mary refused to consider remarriage.

4 Ie two and one-half years after the death of her husband, Louis II of Hungary, at the battle of Mohács

the subject, with what success I do not know: that is for you to judge. It will now be up to you to commend my humble efforts to her serene Majesty the queen, for it was you who pushed me into this.

You will hear the whole epic of our misfortunes[5] from the man I am sending.[6] It is hardly safe to put the story on paper, so diverse are people's opinions. Your letter hinted something about a gift,[7] but there is no need to worry about that: I shall count myself amply rewarded for my labours if what I have done pleases the queen. But if she suggests sending some token of her good will towards me, I think it would be safe enough with the courier to whom I am entrusting this letter and the book. You must be the judge of that too, since I have had little previous experience of the man. Let me know how everything is going with you; that would please me more than anything.

Things have simply reached the point of madness; there is no limit to the fanaticism of either side. Béda has published another *Apologia* against me,[8] sillier and crazier than the earlier one.[9] A book has just appeared from the pen of a Franciscan, a certain Ludovicus, who is a defender – God help us! – of his sacred order, and so stupid and foul-mouthed that nothing could dishonour that order more.[10] Yet the fellow brags that he belongs to

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5 Literally 'Iliad of our misfortunes'; see *Adagia* I iii 26.

6 Felix Rex (Polyphemus); see Epp 2121:4, 2130.

7 See Ep 2011:53–4.

8 The *Apologia adversus clandestinos Lutheranos* (Paris: Josse Bade, 1 February 1529). Erasmus countered with his *Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas*, which was appended to the *Responsio ad epistolam Alberti Pii* of March 1529 (cf Ep 2108 n10). On recent developments in Erasmus' conflict with his Paris nemesis, Noël Béda, see CWE 14 xvi.

9 The *Annotationes* of 1526 against Erasmus and Lefèvre d'Étaples (Ep 1664 n1).

10 The 'Ludovicus' in question was Luis de Carvajal (c 1500–1552), a Franciscan Observant who had studied at Salamanca and Paris. He seems for a time to have admired Erasmus but then allied himself with the conservatism of Erasmus' French and Spanish critics. His *Apologia monasticae religionis diluens nugas Erasmi* was published at Salamanca in 1528 and at Paris in 1529 (n pr in either case). Receiving first a copy of the Paris edition, Erasmus replied with the *Responsio adversus febricitantis cuiusdam libellum* (Basel: Froben, March 1529) in which he referred to Carvajal as 'Pantalabus,' the name of the buffoon in Horace's *Satires* 1.8.11 (cf Ep 2126 n1). While the *Responsio* was in press, Erasmus received a copy of the Salamanca edition, together with the advice of Alfonso de Valdés and others not to publish a reply (Epp 2126, 2198, 2301). Carvajal replied to the *Responsio* with his *Dulcoratio amarulentiarum Erasmicae responsionis* (Paris: S. de Colines 1530), to which Erasmus responded indirectly with an open letter to the Franciscans (*Epistola ad gracculos* = Ep 2275)

the community of those who have put aside all earthly desires and live in accordance with the true, that is the evangelical, rule of Francis. He appears to be Spanish.[11] The same book, I believe, has been published in Spain in the language of that country.[12]

Alberto Pio, prince of Carpi, once imperial ambassador and a close friend of the pope, who has now gone over to the king of France, has published a book that he has been labouring on for several years.[13] In it he does two things: he tries to persuade us that I was responsible for all the trouble that has arisen in the world; and he refutes the teachings of Luther, but with such feeble arguments that I do not think he has thought deeply about the matter.

What the pope is doing is unclear. I hope he works for the peace of the church and not for private vengeance.[14] I can see no outcome except bloodshed. Would that Christ might suddenly appear, like a *deus ex machina*, and bring a happy ending to this tangled tragedy. I have no idea what the diet at Speyer will produce.[15] Farewell.

Basel, 26 February 1529

2111 / To Viglius Zuichemus Basel, 1 March 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2101.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO VIGLIUS ZUICHEMUS OF FRIESLAND, GREETING

I would like you to know, my dearest Viglius, that I have received no letter for a long time that gave me more pleasure than yours, for it painted such a clear picture of your courteous and amiable character. In praising me to the skies, you made me understand what kind feelings you have for me;

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published at Freiburg by Johannes Faber Emmeus (c February 1530), as well as in two other letters (Epp 2299, 2300) published in the *Epistolae floridae* of 1531.

11 This surmise was correct, but by the time Erasmus wrote Ep 2126, he had made up his mind that the author was a Franciscan 'from Brabant or Gelderland' who had visited him in Basel (Ep 2126:63–111). Erasmus' confusion about the identity of the author was cleared up only when he received Ep 2198.

12 This was a mistake, the result probably of Erasmus' having heard of the Salamanca edition but not yet having seen it.

13 See Ep 2118:19–33. On Pio and his controversy with Erasmus, see also Epp 1634, 1987, 2080.

14 Ie private vengeance for the sack of Rome by the emperor's troops (May 1527) and its aftermath. See Ep 1987 n1.

15 See Ep 2107 n1.

and when you nervously asked my forgiveness for your presumption in daring to write to me, you only made me appreciate the splendid modesty of your nature, which does honour to your youth and lends it a special attractiveness. It gives me good grounds for hope that you may join the company of those who have combined solid learning with moral integrity. So I would like to assure you that your charming letter worked on me like a spell and has made me your firm friend. If you think I say this more out of politeness than from the heart, well, put me to the test in any way you choose – I make no exceptions.

What benefit you expect from seeing me, I do not know; but as far as I am concerned, if you find a convenient time to come here, not only shall I arrange to meet you, but I shall put my home and everything in it at your disposal. This letter, written in my own hand, can stand as a sort of promissory note affirming my unfailing good will towards you; so if I let you down, you can justifiably take me to court. Blessings on that fine man Bucho, now gone to another world, who in life and in death provided you with leisure for the Muses,[1] and I see that so far you have not failed him and are unlikely to do so in the future.

As for your offer of strong and faithful assistance against my adversaries, I embrace and cherish your offer of loyal support. But I should prefer you, dear Viglius, to disport yourself in the grassy meadows of the Muses, rather than to grapple with the likes of the Crab and Planodorp. They are two ogres, one of whom, in a strange metamorphosis, has been changed by this new gospel from a lamb into a viper or (if this is possible) something worse,[2] and the other is ripe for hanging.[3] I must bear my fate myself, my unending struggle with men like Lee, Zúñiga, Béda, and Cousturier,[4] or rather with the whole regiment of false monks and sham theologians,

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2111

1 Zuichemus' uncle, Bernard Bucho; see Ep 2101:33–5.

2 Ludovicus Carinus (Ep 1799), on whose name Erasmus here makes the insulting pun 'Carcinus,' the Crab. For reasons that are not clear, Erasmus and Carinus, who had long been friends, had a terrible falling out in the summer of 1528 (Epp 2048:54–6, 2063 nn1, 3, 2085:4–15). Carinus had recently left Dôle for Besançon (Epp 2112:11–14, 2120:4–5, 2191:111), and he had now come to Basel in pursuit of Erasmus' messenger Polyphemus, with whom he had had a brawl of some sort in Besançon (Ep 2112:32–46, 2152:20–1).

3 Heinrich Eppendorf (Ep 2086), one of Erasmus' derisive names for whom was 'Planodorpius,' a Latinization of Eppendorf construed as 'Eben-dorf' (Even [ie flat]-village); cf Epp 1496:122, 1934 n35.

4 See Epp 1341A:823–30 and 1994A:61–2 with nn13 and 15 (Lee), 1341A:867–927 (Zúñiga), 2082 nn24 (Cousturier) and 56 (Béda).

monsters so wicked and vicious that Hercules had a lighter task in fighting with Cacus, Cerberus, the lion, and the Lernean hydra. You, my dear young man, should ponder how you can win a reputation for yourself without incurring envy. Farewell.

Basel, 1 March 1529

2112 / To Ludwig Baer

Basel, 2 March 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. On Baer, who had already left Basel, see Ep 2087.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO LUDWIG BAER, GREETING

I am truly happy to acknowledge your long-standing and more than brotherly affection for me, and I thank you sincerely, since I shall never be able to repay you. But no house can suit me that does not have a fireplace.[1] So there seemed no point in sending my man to you. I had received several invitations to Besançon, so I sent my personal courier there to inquire from the officials of the archbishop and the archdeacon and from the treasurer whether it would be suitable for me to move there.[2] They have now replied that it would not suit me, mentioning several reasons, the principal of which they confided to the courier, not to a letter. I had guessed the reason myself: some sort of disagreement between the clergy and the authorities. My fine friend the Crab,[3] who has found a bolthole there (for he had begun to cause a bad smell at Dôle), had secretly spread a lot of poisonous reports about me, especially to the authorities, evangelical schemer that he is! So I recently sent someone to Freiburg to inspect the house offered me by the burgomaster.[4] It was built for Maximilian – a quite splendid place, although

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2112

1 On Erasmus' loathing of German stoves (as opposed to open fireplaces), see Epp 1248 n5, 1258 n18, 1399:4–7, 2055 n7, 2118:45–6.

2 'Official' (*officialis*) is here used in the technical sense of chief judge of a diocesan court. The official of the archbishop was Léonard de Gruyères (Ep 2139). Until his death in January 1529, the official of the archdeacon had been Guillaume Guérard (Ep 1534 n9), who was succeeded by Désiré Morel (Ep 1534 n11). The archbishop was Antoine de Vergy (1488–1541), with whom Erasmus had a slight connection via Thiébaut Biétry (Ep 1391). Until his death in 1528, the archdeacon had been Ferry de Carondelet (Ep 2002). The treasurer was François Bonvalot (Ep 1534 n10).

3 Carinus (Ep 2111 n2); see lines 32–46 below.

4 The burgomaster at the time was Sebastian von Blumeneck (documented 1484–1542). The house, 'zum Wallfisch,' in the Franziskanergasse, had been built in 1516 by Jakob Villinger (Ep 1149) for the use of Emperor Maximilian I in his

unfinished. I am pleased by what is built, not just by what was to be built. I think I could be happier at Speyer, if I was not put off by the horde of princes.[5]

Yesterday I received another letter from the archbishop of Palermo, who is the first chancellor of the imperial court of Brabant,[6] promising favourable, even generous, treatment if I agreed to return. I would certainly do so, if all German stoves were put out, for I have an infernal hatred of those things.[7] How safe it is for me to remain here, I do not know. I hear reports of murmurings and threats against me – hardly behaviour advocated by the Gospels. I am also aware that wherever I go, the journey will not be without great danger to my life, for even the slightest thing – a change of wine, for example, or even a new coat – puts me at risk.[8] But whatever the outcome, I must move somewhere. I would like to remain here until the booksellers return from Frankfurt,[9] but I fear it may not be safe.

The Crab was here again, and with that remarkable cunning of his contrived to stir up a new fuss. You know my man, the bearded Polyphemus.[10] As I told you, he went to Besançon on my instructions, and while he was there, he had some sort of brawl with the Crab over me. When Polyphemus

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old age. Erasmus was given the use of the second floor (ie the floor above the ground floor), which was still the property of Villinger's widow (Allen Ep 2256:28–31). Erasmus lived in it from April 1529 to September 1531.

5 The imperial diet was currently meeting in Speyer; cf Ep 2107 n1.

6 Jean (II) de Carondelet (Epp 1276, 2089 n3), who had recently sent Erasmus a letter via Haio Herman and Pieter Gillis (Ep 2089:8–10). The reference here may be to that letter or to 'another.' At all events, it is not extant. It is not clear whether 'first chancellor' (*primus cancellarius*) was an actual title or simply a courteous appellation devised by Erasmus. Cf Ep 1334, where Erasmus addresses Carondelet as *consilarius summus* 'supreme counsellor.' Carondelet was from 1519 the president of the privy council of the Netherlands and the most influential adviser of the regent, Margaret of Austria. In 1531, when Mary of Hungary became regent, the privy council was divided into two bodies. The nobles were transferred to a new council of state, while the jurists ('men of the long robe') became members of the new privy council. Carondelet served as president of both councils until 1540. See James D. Tracy *Holland Under Habsburg Rule, 1506–1566: The Formation of a Body Politic* (Berkeley 1990) 45–6, 99.

7 See n1 above.

8 Cf Epp 296:61–72, 1805:289–92, 2118:41–4, 2133:97–8.

9 In particular, Erasmus wanted to await the return of Hieronymus Froben (Ep 1226), who had succeeded his father Johann as head of the Froben firm. He returned to Basel sometime between 1 and 10 April; see Epp 2140:7–8, 2147:7–8.

10 On Polyphemus (Felix Rex), see Ep 2101 n1.

left for Dôle, the Crab, they say, started to work on secret plans to have the fellow thrown into jail on his return; and this would have happened, had Polyphemus not boasted that he was one of king Ferdinand's bodyguard.[11] Frustrated in this attempt, the Crab immediately came to Basel at nightfall. As soon as I found this out, I guessed what was afoot and ordered Polyphemus to leave the next morning. He was scarcely gone when, around nine o'clock, two bailiffs arrived at my house to take Polyphemus to the magistrate. They were told that he had left. They returned after lunch and received the same reply. The producer of this melodrama began to threaten me too on the grounds that I had put Polyphemus up to it. This is where the 'gospel' has got us!

The other side is equally mad. Béda has published a little book that is nothing but one long rant.[12] Alberto, prince of Carpi, has issued a work in Paris in which he tries to convince us that Erasmus is responsible for the whole Lutheran furor.[13] Ludovicus the Minorite has produced an overheated piece in defence of every pious dogma to which he imagines Erasmus to be opposed.[14] I replied to all of these.[15] It is on men like these that the defence of the church depends! There are such extremes on both fronts that one would hesitate which side to join, except that the best course, I believe, is to plant one's feet firmly on the unshakeable rock which is Christ.[16] I suspect you are not much enamoured of this sort of stuff. However, if you have the time to spare, I shall send you these slanderous productions and my replies. Meanwhile, my dearest and truest friend, I send you my very best wishes.

Basel, 2 March 1529

If my erstwhile neighbour the burgomaster is with you,[17] please greet him warmly on my behalf. I shall send you the rest of the new publications as well, if you indicate to whom you wish me to entrust them.

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11 Polyphemus was boasting of a post that he hoped to obtain; see Ep 2130:62–74.
12 See Ep 2110 n8.
13 See Ep 2110:32–8.
14 Luis de Carvajal; see Ep 2110 n10.
15 To Pio and Béda in one volume (Ep 2110 n8), and to Carvajal in another published at the same time (Ep 2110 n10).
16 Matt 7:24–5; Luke 6:47–9; 1 Cor 10:4
17 Heinrich Meltinger (d 1529), who had lived just opposite Erasmus in Basel and had strongly opposed the introduction of the Reformation. Fearing for his life in the tumults leading to the final victory of the reformed party (Epp 2158:19–22, 2201:42–4), he left Basel on the night of 8–9 February 1529 and died at Colmar soon thereafter.

2113 / To Quirinus Talesius

Basel, 6 March 1529

This letter was published as an appendix to Pieter van Opmeer *Historia martyrum Batavicorum* (Cologne: Gualter and Henning 1625), probably on the basis of the original; see Allen's introduction. On Talesius, Erasmus' trusted amanuensis, see Ep 1966.

I, Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, being sound of mind and body, give my servant Quirinus Talesius the sum of 150 *écus au soleil*[1] in recognition of his faithful service over several years,[2] to use in whatever manner he wishes.

In testimony whereof I have written this with my own hand and affixed my customary seal.[3]

Basel, 6 March 1529

2114 / To Cornelius Grapheus

Basel, 7 March 1529

On Cornelius Grapheus (Cornelis Schrijver), c 1482–1558, the poet and humanist whose flirtation with Lutheran ideas had attracted the hostile attention of the Netherlands Inquisition and cost him his post as one of the secretaries of the town of Antwerp, see Ep 1299 n24. The letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO CORNELIUS GRAPHEUS, GREETING

I would gladly have acceded to your wishes about printing your poem, my dear Cornelius, but two considerations held me back. First, it did not seem to me the sort of poem that would add much to your reputation. Secondly,

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2113

1 The current French gold coin, the *écu à la couronne au soleil*, with 23.0 carats fineness and containing 3.296 g fine gold, was worth exactly 40 sols or £2 0s 0d tournois, about 56d sterling, and 76 (6s 4d) groot Flemish. The sum of 150 *écus* was therefore worth £300 tournois, or about £35 sterling, or about £47 10s 0d groot Flemish, the equivalent of 1,400 days' wages for a Cambridge master mason (at 6d per day) or 1,140 days' wages for an Antwerp master mason (at 15d groot Brabant = 10d groot Flemish per day). See CWE 12 650 Table 3D.

2 Since Quirinus remained in Erasmus' service until 1531, this was not a gift at parting.

3 Erasmus' customarily sealed important documents with a seal showing the head of Terminus encircled by the motto *Cedo nulli* 'I yield to no one.' See Ep 2018 n2.

there were several things in it that were likely to increase hostility towards you, which, it seemed to me, would be far from helpful to your interests, especially in the present circumstances.[1] Your misfortunes pain me deeply, although I have more than my own share of troubles. But I think that whatever appears to be the work of heaven must be borne with a brave heart.

The scandalous behaviour of certain monks is at the root of this present storm.[2] But, it seems to me, a second kind of monk, worse than the first, is now appearing; and on both sides there is such awful fanaticism.[3] Nor do I see any end in sight, unless the Lord, the great master-designer, appears from the machine[4] to chant that old refrain from tragedy, 'The works of heaven take many shapes.'[5] In the meantime, the best course is to plant one's feet on the solid rock that is impervious to all storms,[6] until the present tempest turns to calm. A good conscience is a great solace. I would encourage you to aspire to this, if I did not know that you have always been a man of the utmost integrity. May the Lord use this furnace to purify his gold and refine it.[7]

If I were with you, I would gladly do what I could both for you and for your brother.[8] But I do not see what I can do at present. The story must

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2114

1 Allen was unable to find any published work of Grapheus that could be identified as the poem mentioned here and drew the conclusion that it had likely been suppressed in accordance with Erasmus' advice.

2 Allen saw this as a reference to the current disorders in Basel (Ep 2097 n1), but these were hardly the work of 'certain monks.' Erasmus appears, rather, to be referring to the general religious turmoil of the age in which 'monks,' chiefly mendicant friars, were the bitterest foes of humanist learning and religious reforms. But cf the following note.

3 By 'second kind of monk,' Erasmus presumably meant the reformers, and he clearly saw in the violent iconoclasm in Basel in February 1529 an example of their 'awful fanaticism.' Erasmus assumed (see lines 23–4 below) that Grapheus had heard reports of that 'dreadful commotion.'

4 Ie as *deus ex machina*, to resolve the hopeless difficulties of the plot. Cf Ep 2110:42–3.

5 Erasmus cites in Greek. Five plays of Euripides (*Alcestis*, *Andromache*, *Bacchae*, *Helen*, and, with slight variations, *Medea*) end with a brief choral passage, of which this is the first line. The passage expresses resignation in face of the powerful will of heaven.

6 See Ep 2112 n16.

7 *Adagia* IV i 58; cf Mal 3:2–3.

8 Johannes Grapheus (Jan de Schrijver), d 1571, who owned a press at Antwerp

have reached you some time ago of the dreadful commotion here.[9] I wish you and yours every blessing.

Basel, 7 March 1529

2115 / From Erasmus Schets

Antwerp, 7 March 1529

This letter was first published by Allen, using the autograph preserved in the University Library at Basel (Scheti epistolae 18). Schets' reply is Ep 2159.

Since 1525 the Antwerp banker Erasmus Schets (Epp 1541, 1931) had managed Erasmus' financial affairs in England and the Netherlands and had done much to increase the reliability of the income from his various pensions and annuities.

Cordial greetings. Since the fifth of September I have received no letters from you.[1] My warm feelings for you make this seem a longer interval than it really is. Meanwhile I console myself with the hope that you are well so far as the exigencies of age and the uncertainties of the body allow, that is to say, that you are not suffering from some fatal illness. I wish you were as aware as I am of the many people here who are grieved by your absence and who consider themselves unfortunate never to be able to enjoy your company during their lifetime. Perhaps that fact could make you more eager to return to us and to return sooner. I know that people would give a great deal to have you resident here. Many are offering hospitality, board, and gifts, promising to provide Burgundy and anything else your beloved Basel has been able to supply.[2] But to what purpose? For as long as you refuse to come, they pass their lives under this heavy burden and in semidespair.

We understand here what good friends you lost with the passing of Carondelet, the archdeacon of Besançon, and the death of Froben.[3] There are people here whose devotion to you makes them long for your presence; they even venture to say that fate snatched away these friends of yours so that you can turn more quickly to new and happy friendships with us, which they are very ready to offer. They have in mind not the middling

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9 See n3 above.

2115

1 Ep 2039 had reached him, but Epp 2057 and 2072 had not.

2 On the Burgundy wine, see Ep 2085 n1.

3 Ferry de Carondelet had died on 27 June 1528 (Ep 2002 introduction). For Erasmus' 'lament on the death of Johann Froben' see Ep 1900.

sort of person, but important people, men of decent religious sentiments, whose lives are founded on the practice of true religion and distinguished by honesty and integrity. But more frequently I am asked why you are so unkind to your homeland and so unresponsive to the strong feelings of your many friends that you do not want to be seen among us, though we are children of the same country as you. Certainly they are envious, and justifiably envious, of the glory and distinction that these foreigners owe to your presence; they hold that this is something that is due to them, not to strangers. But you know what a jealous thing love always is.

If only you would see fit to give us some slight hope of your return, you would rejoice the hearts of many who are now dejected. To a great number of people this would mean more than the unexpected receipt of a rich fortune. Sometimes, despite myself, I too make the same accusation. From time to time I cannot help reproaching you silently in my own mind. I wish you would dispel that charge of heartlessness and remove it from the lips of your rivals, for they do not shrink from calling you a timid exile who, like some banished felon skulking in foreign parts, are afraid to trust yourself to your native land. Could anything be more distressing to pious minds than to see you offering your enemies such a weapon for attack? You should consider whether it would not be better to remove this stumbling block, even if there are significant arguments pushing you in the opposite direction. For we live not for ourselves alone but for all our brothers in Christ. So please give me some small hope of your return so that I can console your friends and provide them with something to counter your critics and slanderers. You could hardly credit how strongly I am urged everywhere by your friends to convey this message to you. If you knew how I am buffeted by requests of this kind, you would take pity on me, and some kindlier impulse would prompt you to send me in reply a few words of comfort for myself and many others.

Luis de Castro wrote me from England to say that, in accordance with my instructions, he has politely informed my lords of Canterbury, London, and Lincoln, that, if it so please their lordships, they should hand to him any money they wish to have sent to you or exchanged; for because of his devotion to you and to me, he was willing to assume that responsibility and would see that it was faithfully discharged.[4] I am aware that something offered as a generous gift and not for the repayment of a debt should not be

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4 William Warham (archbishop of Canterbury), Cuthbert Tunstall (bishop of London), and John Longland (bishop of Lincoln) all contributed to Erasmus' financial support; see Ep 2159:28–32. Luis de Castro (Ep 1931 n3) was Schets' agent in London responsible for the collection and remittance of Erasmus' English revenues.

demanded curtly, and I have so informed Luis. Since I know his character and courteous manner, I have no reason to worry that he acted disrespectfully. The prelates said to Luis that they would do as he suggested. When they act, I shall be informed without great delay.

At the recent fair I did not arrange to pass on any money in your name to Froben's son or his subordinates, since you had given me no instructions, nor shall I do so until you write and tell me what you want and where the money should be sent.[5]

If I had any news, I would gladly pass it on. There is nothing worth writing about from Spain, except that the emperor is preparing a fairly powerful force. They say that his Majesty has in mind to make an expedition to Italy this year;[6] however, it is to be feared that this will not happen, since it would require a sizeable army, and one cannot easily see how it could be supported in Italy in view of the famine that is ravishing that country.[7] To crush the enemy so that they could not recover their lost strength and augment the armies that the emperor already has there, he could send some additional soldiers from Spain under the command of one of the grandees, for it is agreed that in the past year his enemies were contained so strictly within their own boundaries that they have had little or no wheat from their farms or estates. If this year the same thing happened again with a blockade by the emperor's forces, the enemy could be driven to surrender in the following year, and the world, which has been so long unsettled, would be brought closer to peace. May this be the will of God, to whose mercy and safe keeping I commend you. Farewell.

Antwerp, 7 March 1529

Your dear friend, Erasmus Schets

To that most learned and excellent man Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, his friend and chief support

2116 / To Johann Lotzer Basel, 8 March 1529

Johann (1) Lotzer of Horb in Württemberg (documented 1508–32), who had studied medicine at Tübingen, was now the personal physician of Louis V, elector Palatine. Following the death of Ulrich von Hutten in 1523, Lotzer had purchased his library, which included a manuscript of Quintilian that Erasmus here asks to borrow.

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5 No letter containing such instructions is extant. Hieronymus Froben had been at the spring book fair in Frankfurt; see Ep 2112:29–30 with n9.

6 Ep 2109 n4

7 Cf Ep 2109:8–9, Allen Ep 2285:46–7.

The letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANN LOTZER, GREETING

No man can feel embarrassment and love at the same time. So you must know, my distinguished sir, that it is my love of learning that gives me the effrontery to address you in this begging letter, although I am not known to you as a close friend and cannot claim to have done you some previous service. My confidence has been increased by your singular generosity, which I have heard of from many people and especially from Hieronymus Froben.[1]

I shall tell you briefly what is on my mind. I have various notes on Quintilian provided by other scholars,[2] and I hear that there is a very old codex in your possession.[3] If you are willing to make it available to me for a few days, I hope that the learned reader will not be disappointed by my efforts on behalf of so fine an author; your treasure will be returned to you safe and sound – and with interest. Moreover, I shall make sure that later ages know to whom it owes this kindness, as you see I did in the preface to my recent edition of Seneca.

You also have Marcellus the physician.[4] Perhaps you could add it to the Quintilian![5] Its publication will bring you great acclaim, and no press could do it better justice than Froben's.[6] If there is any service I could do for you, I shall show you that you are not dealing with the sort of person who cannot appreciate a kindness. Farewell, most learned of physicians.

Basel, 8 March 1529

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2116

1 Ep 2112 n9

2 It appears that Erasmus was at this time contemplating an edition of Quintilian. In the end, however, he did not produce one, perhaps because the Basel printer Johann Bebel published one in August 1529.

3 The manuscript that Hutten had found at Fulda in 1520; see Ulrich von Hutten *Opera quae reperiri potuerunt omnia* ed Eduard Böcking 1 (Leipzig 1859; repr Aalen 1963) 350:16–19.

4 Ie a manuscript of the second-century physician and poet Marcellus Sidetes. He wrote a treatise *On Medical Matters* in 42 books of heroic metre, of which only two fragments survive, one on lycanthropy and one on medical remedies derived from fish. Hutten had found a manuscript at Fulda along with the Quintilian (see preceding note).

5 It appears that Froben, armed with this letter, tried unsuccessfully to secure the loan of the manuscripts (see Allen's introduction). But Ep 2306 shows that Erasmus' relations with Lotzer remained good.

6 Johannes Cornarius (Ep 2204) produced an edition of Marcellus for the Froben firm in 1536.

2117 / From Johann von Botzheim Überlingen, 8 March 1529

On Botzheim (d 1535), canon of the cathedral chapter at Constance and a devoted friend and correspondent of Erasmus, see Epp 1285, 1341A. When the Reformation triumphed at Constance, Botzheim moved with the chapter to Überlingen, where he remained for the rest of his life.

The autograph of this letter was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It was first published as Ep 99 in Förstemann/Günther.

Cordial greetings. The man from Ghent about whom you wrote, Uutenhove, never appeared.[1] I was eagerly looking forward to his friendship, which was all the more appealing because of your commendation. I hope that wherever you move or take up residence, you will find a healthy place that is safe and suitable for your work. Benoît returned from Venice: you should ask him about the carnival there.[2] If he goes to you, I shall expect you to send the promised *apologiae* back with him.[3] The distress that these wrangles are causing you to the neglect of more important things distresses me too.

I know nothing of Eppendorf and the others, whose story you expected me to be told by the man from Ghent.[4] I would like to know something about it. You can safely tell it to Benoît, if you wish, for he is coming straight back from Basel. I have also been hoping for a long time now to get a reliable account of the disturbances in Basel,[5] but so far that has not been possible; I imagine you do not like to write about such matters. Never have any doubts about my continued affection for you; as far as I am concerned, I would rather welcome the approach of death than abandon my deep respect for you or let it drag on in icy formality.

I cling on here, while the situation gradually slips into chaos. Unless the disturbances are brought under control, it is all over with us.[6]

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2117

1 See Ep 2093. Erasmus had apparently written that Uutenhove would visit Constance on his way to Italy.

2 On the bookseller Benoît Vaugris, see Ep 1395. In 1529 the pre-Lenten carnival in Venice fell on 9 February.

3 Ie Erasmus' replies to the attacks on him by Alberto Pio, Noël Béda, and Luis de Carvajal; see Epp 2110 nn8 and 10, 2112 n15.

4 See Epp 2086, 2099, and for Botzheim's interest in the matter, Ep 1934.

5 See Ep 2097 n1.

6 Überlingen remained Catholic and free of internal agitation in favour of the Reformation. But in this it was the single exception among the imperial cities of south-west Germany, many of which had already formally instituted the

May Christ, in his wonted mercy, be pleased to help us in our afflictions. Farewell.

Überlingen, 8 March 1529

Your truest friend, Johann von Botzheim

Benoît doubts whether he will get to Basel this time. If the Frankfurt fair turns out well, he will not go for the present. In that case please send me a letter by another courier, when someone reliable turns up.

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, consummate theologian and chief defender of good letters, my most respected patron and mentor

In Basel

2118 / To Antonio Hoyos de Salamanca Basel, 10 March 1529

This letter, which is Erasmus' answer to one no longer extant, was first published in the *Opus epistolarum.* On Antonio Hoyos de Salamanca, bishop-elect of Gurk, see Ep 2098.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ANTONIO, BISHOP-ELECT OF GURK, GREETING

You were kind enough to honour me with two letters, my distinguished young friend. I replied to both. It was not, however, a fair exchange, since your long and polished first letter[1] got a brief reply, and your second letter,[2] which was of respectable length, got an even briefer response,[3] for I was very busy at the time (but then, when am I not busy?). The man who delivered the second letter promised to return, but he deceived me. A few days later a servant told me that he had delivered the same letter to a certain priest.[4] If he was guilty of deception, that is nothing new, for this is the daily game of those who glory in the new gospel. If you sent me a third letter, you should know that it never arrived. In your second letter you suspected that I was not clear about your meaning when

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Reformation and were actively seeking security in alliance with the German princes or the Swiss, or both. So Botzheim's fear was about the progress of the Reformation in general rather than about circumstances in Überlingen.

2118

1 Not extant; contemporary with Ep 2096
2 Ep 2104
3 Not extant
4 The reference to 'a servant' is unclear. The text can be translated either 'my servant' or 'your servant.' The identity of the priest is equally obscure, as is the nature of the 'game' that was possibly being played.

you said you wanted someone who was 'free.'[5] I confess I hesitated between thinking you wanted a bachelor and someone not involved in the sects – or rather I guessed you meant both. But I never suspected that this Peter was married.[6] See how little interest I take in the gossip of another city!

A year ago Alberto Pio sent me a book, which he has now published in Paris.[7] The disaster at Rome followed a short time later,[8] and I could not find out for certain where Alberto was living. As a result I did not think of replying. Finally, from the letters of friends I managed to learn that he was in France. I wrote the man a letter, advising him to put off publication until he received my response; or if he did not like that, to moderate the unpleasant and unfounded criticisms he made of me.[9] But the book had already appeared before my letter reached Paris, and a copy arrived here late. So I spent five days rereading the book and preparing my *Responsio*.[10] I had heard earlier that it was not his own work, and I know he added supporting evidence from Scripture with the assistance of the Paris theologians. I discovered this by collating the book with the handwritten copy he had sent me. Perhaps you will think me a not altogether unprejudiced judge. But unless I am blind, this book shows few signs of the intelligence and learning I expected from Alberto.

Along with my hastily produced *Responsio* I am sending *The Christian Widow*, which I have dedicated, as requested, to the emperor's sister Mary, the former queen of Hungary.[11] I do not feel very comfortable with the subject, which is complex and hardly suited to a young woman who, unless I am mistaken, is destined for marriage.[12] All the same, I covered the pages with words. I shall await your verdict, that is, if you can bring yourself to put aside your serious studies for a while and turn to this divertissement.

The present storm has blown up most inconveniently for me. My poor body is so weak that not even in the loveliest part of spring could

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5 See Ep 2104:6–9. But the use of the word 'free' to describe the tutor occurs in a letter from Georgius Amelius: Ep 2096:25–6.

6 See also line 48 below. Allen (14n) says 'perhaps a servant,' but the reference is clearly to the person that Erasmus had recommended as a tutor, Peter Bitterlin; see Epp 2098 n3, 2104 n2.

7 The manuscript of Pio's *Responsio paraenetica* (Josse Bade, 7 January 1529) had reached Erasmus by September 1526; see Epp 1634 introduction, 1744:137–40.

8 Ie the sack of Rome in May 1527

9 Ep 2080

10 Ep 2108 n10

11 Ep 2100

12 Mary was twenty-three and firmly refused ever to remarry. Cf Ep 2110:5–7.

I contemplate a change of wine, or bed, or climate without great risk to my life;[13] now in winter I am being forced to leave the nest to which I have grown accustomed for almost eight years now.[14] And those stoves suit me no better than death itself.[15] Yet, whatever the result, the die must be cast.[16] For many reasons, however, I think it safer to keep quiet about these matters:[17] there are people, both here and elsewhere, who are threatening me.

The courier who brought back your friend Peter's horse would have been loaded up with several books,[18] if I had not felt sure he would refuse the burden. I shall send them another time, if I hear you are interested. Meanwhile, may our Lord Jesus have you and yours in his safe keeping.

Basel, 10 March 1529

2119 / To Jacques Toussain

Basel, 13 March 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Jacques Toussain (d 1547), a disciple and lifelong friend of Guillaume Budé, was soon to become professor of Greek at Francis I's new royal college (1530). In the uproar over Erasmus' inept joke about Budé in the *Ciceronianus* (Ep 1948 introduction), Toussain had defended Budé's reputation in a Latin couplet that circulated widely (Ep 2077:10–13, Allen Ep 2291:25–31).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JACQUES TOUSSAIN, GREETING

I wonder what you hope to gain by those satiric lines of yours,[1] which do justice neither to yourself nor to me and are damaging to the study of letters, which both of us are working so hard to promote. Against the stubborn enemies of the Muses it would have been better to close ranks.[2] You have

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13 Cf Epp 296:61–72, 1805:277–80, 2112:26–8, 2133:97–8.
14 Seven years and four months
15 See Ep 2112 n1.
16 *Adagia* I iv 32
17 Cf Epp 2158:41–5 and 73–5; 2196:117–19.
18 'Your friend Peter' fits Bitterlin (n6 above), who was currently living with Hoyos; see Ep 2098 n5.

2119

1 Text in David O. McNeil *Guillaume Budé and Humanism in the Reign of Francis I* (Geneva 1975) 73 n72. Alec Dalzell's English version is as follows: 'Erasmus places Bade first and Budaeus behind / Why should you wonder if he favours his own kind?'
2 Erasmus uses the Greek verb *συγκρητίζειν*, to 'syncretize,' ie to abandon one's own quarrels and stand together against a common foe. The word was thus used in a Cretan proverb; see *Adagia* I i 11.

never been injured by me in word or deed, and I do not concede that you are a greater admirer of Budé than I am. I am certainly not jealous of him, nor do I wish to topple him from the heights of glory, which he has attained by his own merits. This is something I want you to understand, my dear Toussain, not so much for my sake as for the sake of learning, and indeed for Budé's sake, for verses of that sort stir up hostility against him among those who are close friends of mine. For it is still not the case that everyone is a Béda.[3] I beg you, let Budé enjoy the esteem of everyone. For although I am certain that he, as a serious and honest man, takes no pleasure in this sort of foolery, there are people who suspect the opposite. Farewell.

Basel, 13 March 1529

2120 / From Johannes Cochlaeus Dresden, 13 March 1529

The manuscript of this letter, autograph with the address-sheet missing, is in the Rehdiger Collection at the University Library in Wrocław. It was first published in LB (III/2 1739–40 *Appendix epistolarum* no 348). Erasmus' rather non-responsive reply is Ep 2143.

Johannes Cochlaeus (Ep 1928), learned humanist and vehement opponent of Luther and other reformers, had now been court chaplain to Duke George of Saxony for a little over a year.

Cordial greetings, dear Erasmus, my distinguished friend. I received and carefully attended to everything you sent me here and have duly passed it on.[1] I am very sorry that you had to hire a courier at your own expense;[2] but I am sorrier still about the trouble you are having not just with Eppendorf but also with Carinus,[3] whom I once saw at Frankfurt. I beg you, take no notice of such spiteful adversaries, for what harm can they do you? Luther cunningly disdained not just his lesser foes (there are many such in Germany, myself included), but even his more important antagonists, while he got on with the business of herding the people in the direction he chose. Your name has long been so famous throughout the world that even the

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3 Ie an enemy of Erasmus and the humanities. On Béda, see Ep 2082 n56.

2120

1 Allen conjectured that Erasmus might have sent copies of Epp 2086 and 2099 to Duke George because of his interest in Erasmus' quarrel with Eppendorf (line 4 below).

2 Cf Ep 2122:1.

3 See Ep 2111 n2. News of Erasmus' falling out with Carinus might well have been sent to Dresden by Christoph von Carlowitz; see Ep 2085.

greatest scholars cannot cast a shadow over it. You have with you several assistants and secretaries who are perfectly capable of defending your honour against raving windbags of that sort. There is no need for you to waste a single hour over them. So do consider who you are, or rather, the gifts that God has given you. A man like you, before whom all learned men bow the head, ought not to lower himself by tangling with young nobodies who only want to win glory for themselves at your expense.[4] The world expects from you something more sublime, which no one else can provide.[5] You are much too valuable to spend your time on controversy or even to busy yourself with correcting the work of others in the press, since God has given you in such abundance the grace to write works of your own. So please pay no heed to all these noisy fools, whether they come from Spain, or France, or Germany. Press on with new works, which no one else can write.[6] You have shown us in several of the Psalms what your eloquence and learning can accomplish in the richness of your treatment of Scripture and the breadth and brilliance of your exegesis.[7] If you pardon my temerity, I shall tell you my secret wish. I asked you once to produce a short summary of all the good arts in which the young should be trained.[8] Now, if you will permit me, I want to press you more strongly still, to write a succinct exposition of Sacred Scripture; it should occupy several books at least, and provide a handy and reliable guide for those who are in a hurry to gain a rapid knowledge of all the books of the Bible. Lyra is too dry,[9] Jerome is too long-winded and too concerned with presenting various interpretations. I pray that God may give us an Erasmian exposition, something companionable and succinct!

These new gospellers, hardly more than callow youths, do not scruple to insult and defame you, an old man celebrated and respected the world over. For myself, I have qualms about writing a letter that might interrupt for a moment the unique and sacred responsibilities that, we know, God has assigned to you alone. So pay no attention to the pointless baying of your critics, whoever they may be. Continue to produce those works of yours, which envy cannot touch and no one apart from you can write. Ask lesser men and your own assistants to answer those worthless nobodies, so that you may spend your time on more important things. Your man Quirinus

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4 For similar advice, see Epp 2124:8–12 and Allen Epp 2226:13–16, 2272:37–59.
5 Cf Ep 2143:38–41.
6 Cf Ep 2143:43–5.
7 Erasmus had thus far published expositions of Psalms 1–4 and 85 (Epp 327, 1304 n43, 1427, 1535, 2017). Texts in CWE 63–4.
8 No such letter survives.
9 On Nicholas of Lyra, see Ep 182:128n.

will be able to do them full justice.[10] Or if you prefer, have something published under the name of your cook, which will properly defend your honour while poking fun at them and treating them with contempt. I do not think them worthy of either your praise or your censure. This letter is already too long, but I am concerned that anything should intervene to hold up your work.

If I did not write to you at the same time as the chancellor,[11] it was because I did not know in time that he was writing to you. After he had sealed his letter, he told me he was sending it to Strasbourg, and the courier was ready to go. I also had fears that a letter might go astray at Strasbourg. A little later I wrote you a letter and sent it to Basel, via Leipzig, along with one for Master Sichard.[12]

At present I am engaged in a highly dangerous controversy with Luther; for here too he has his supporters who resent anything that favours the church and opposes him. The prince is absolutely solid, but not everyone is so minded. I dare not put everything in a letter, nor would it be wise for your Honour to write anything confidential to me, although I would love to pour all my secrets into your ear, if letters were safe from interception. But nowhere can one count on good faith.[13] That recent letter you mentioned never reached me.

As for my occupying two seats,[14] that must be blamed on the difficulties of the times. I should have twice that many, one in Rome with the penitentiaries of the pope,[15] one at Frankfurt as dean of the church of the

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10 Quirinus Talesius (Ep 2113)

11 Simon Pistoris (Ep 2122). The letter mentioned here is not extant, but it doubtless had something to do with the Eppendorf affair and may be the letter referred to in Ep 2086:69–70.

12 See n35 below.

13 Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 4.373.

14 An apparently jocular use of the Latin proverb *duabus sellis sedere* (not in the *Adagia*), 'to sit on two seats.' The 'seats' referred to here are clearly ecclesiastical preferments, and Cochlaeus is complaining that he should by rights have the income of four rather than two. Cochlaeus had a comfortable income as court chaplain that was supplemented by continued income from his deanship at Frankfurt (n16 below). On the other hand, he had to bear out of his own pocket the cost of printing his many publications against Luther and the other reformers and, as a result, often had difficulty making ends meet. See Martin Spahn *Johannes Cochlaeus: Ein Lebensbild aus der Zeit der Kirchenspaltung* (Berlin 1898; repr Nieuwkoop 1964) 135.

15 Early in his pontificate, c December 1523, Clement VII offered Cochlaeus a position in the Sacred Penitentiary (the tribunal that deals with matters reserved to the jurisdiction of the pope), but Cochlaeus, wanting to return to Germany

Blessed Virgin,[16] a third at Mainz, a fourth at Dresden. But the times are such that I cannot occupy any with confidence. However, I am not deeply concerned about my personal circumstances, provided my soul remains secure in the Catholic faith. Let my poor body suffer whatever is pleasing to God, or even to my enemies, so long as it is for the benefit of the church. My prince here is racked by fever. He now suffers in the other leg, the poison with which he was infected having erupted there too.[17] If he were to die at this time, there could be no heavier blow for the clergy of this land.

Many thanks for correcting the style of address to More.[18] I am glad that this little book, for what it is worth, has been published. If it is of no great value, at least it will lay the groundwork for a more thorough inquiry into the sequence of consuls. I would have preferred you had corrected the whole letter, for I wrote it in haste, and I do not now have a copy. You generally write my name as 'Cochleius'; I suspect this is an error in spelling, since I use the form 'Cochlaeus.' I have no great affection for the name, but I don't see how I can change it. It was given me long ago at Cologne by the poet Remaclus, whom I think you know.[19] The Englishman Harris[20] used to call me Wendelstinus, which I would prefer, for I

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to fight for the Catholic cause, turned the offer down and joined the retinue of Cardinal Campeggi, who in early 1524 departed on a mission as papal legate in Germany. See Spahn (as in preceding note) 115.

16 The appointment was made while Cochlaeus was in Rome (1518–19), and he occupied the post in 1520. In 1523 he journeyed to Rome and did not return to Frankfurt until the end of 1524. There he encountered such strong hostility from the growing Lutheran party that he fled to Cologne in April 1525. Moving next to Mainz in 1526, he spent a year in the service of Cardinal-Archbishop-Elector Albert of Mainz before moving on to the court chaplaincy in Saxony.

17 Cf Ep 2141:13.

18 In the preface to Cochlaeus' *Consulum Romanorum catalogus* (fols 155–67 in Johann Sichard's *Chronicon*; Basel: Petrus March 1529), Sir Thomas More is addressed as 'baron of England, royal councillor, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster, etc.' See Allen's note (74n).

19 Remaclus Arduenna (c 1480–1524) studied in Cologne 1507–9 before pursuing a career as a tutor and schoolteacher that led eventually to a secretaryship at the imperial court in Brabant. Erasmus' only known letter to him is Ep 411.

20 William Harris of London, who matriculated at Cologne in December 1507 and took a licentiate in civil law in January 1509. This is the only reference to him in Erasmus' correspondence, and nothing is known of his life before or after his time at Cologne.

was born near Nürnberg, in a place called Wendelstein, which means 'spiral staircase.'[21] But enough of this pedantry! Just this once I wanted to give you my simple-minded or erroneous understanding of this matter, so as to put you at your ease about your mistake. I do not care about my name – except how it appears in the Book of Life.[22]

In what you have written against Eppendorf,[23] you bracket Dorp with Lee and Zúñiga, which surprises me, since I thought you were very fond of Dorp and, as far as I can discover from your friends, he was devoted to you.[24]

I hoped to write to you via Wittenberg. It was for this reason that the chancellor[25] and I sent a courier there with a letter from my printer[26] and a letter of mine for Philippus Melanchthon.[27] Your courier had a letter for Melanchthon;[28] I was all the more pleased and anxious to have it delivered, because I was not quite certain if it came from you. I did not want to open it, even if it concerned me vitally. The chancellor, however, did not send the courier back to me as I had asked and as he had promised only the previous morning; perhaps he forgot. He paid off the courier without telling me, although he asked him to go to me before leaving. He is displeased with me because I am trying to defend certain doctrines of the church against Luther.[29] He would like priests to be free to marry and he points out that

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21 The Latin word for snail, *cochlea*, was sometimes used, as here, in the sense of 'spiral staircase.' In sixteenth-century German, *wendelstein* was the word for a spiral staircase (*Wendeltreppe*) made of stone and often enclosed in a round tower on the exterior of a building. These were popular in France and Germany in the early Renaissance.

22 According to Rev 20:12, the dead are judged by what is written in the Book of Life.

23 Presumably a reference to the letter to Duke George mentioned in Ep 2124:4–5

24 On Erasmus' affection for the deceased Louvain theologian Maarten van Dorp, see Ep 1585. In Ep 2143 Erasmus offers no explanation of this curious bracketing of Dorp with his bitter critics Edward Lee (Ep 1341A:823–30, 1994A n19) and Diego López Zuñiga (1341A:868–927). Could it be that a reference to 'Planodorpius' (Eppendorf; see Ep 2111 n3), perhaps conveyed orally, was misunderstood as one to 'Dorpius'?

25 See n11 above.

26 Possibly Valentin Schumann of Leipzig, who published the *Septiceps* at this time; see n31 below.

27 Not extant

28 No letters of Erasmus to Melanchthon from this time are extant.

29 Allen speculated that Cochlaeus was perhaps at work on his *Fasciculus calumniarum Lutheri* (Leipzig: Valentin Schumann, 1529), which has a dedicatory letter dated 5 July 1529. In an appendix entitled *De una specie sacramenti* 'Concerning One Kind in the Sacrament,' there is a letter addressed to 'a certain friend,'

this is happening. He believes that those who prohibit marriage are acting contrary to the Apostle[30] and the church. He seems to favour communion in both kinds and to believe in the substance of bread in the sacrament. In sum, he seems closer to many of Luther's ideas than the clergy would wish. Keep this a secret between us.

My *Septiceps* (which I would gladly have sent you, if I had received a copy) has caused some critical mutterings, even though the critics have not yet seen the book.[31] But long ago I vowed to put my poor body and my material fortune in peril; let the Lord's will be done! I am sending you a little book, which you may wish to show to Baer, a theologian of great learning and high principle.[32] I would welcome your magisterial opinion too on the controversy. But I do not dare ask you to spend even the briefest moment on my barbarous writings. If sometime you have a reliable courier going to my prince, could you please include a letter to me with the letter to the prince, or at any rate do not write anything confidential. If only there was some way in which I could serve you! If you have to move,[33] I cannot think of a more suitable place for you than Cologne. But you, in your wisdom, will know best what to do. Farewell, my eminent and venerable mentor, high priest of true and serious learning.

Dresden, 13 March 1529

Please remember me to those most erudite and honourable men, Master Baer and Beatus Rhenanus,[34] and also to Master Sichard,[35] if he is in Basel, which I rather doubt.

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a 'great man, venerable lord, and most distinguished doctor,' who could have been Pistoris.

30 'The Apostle' usually means St Paul, in which case the reference here might be to 1 Cor 9:5.

31 The *Septiceps Lutherus, ubique sibi suis scriptis contrarius* (Leipzig: Valentin Schumann, 22 April 1529), Cochlaeus' vitriolic denunciation of 'Seven-Headed Luther, Who Everywhere Contradicts Himself in His Writings.' The frontispiece of the work, showing Luther as a seven-headed monster, is one of the most famous images from the period; see Roland Bainton *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville 1950) 297.

32 On Ludwig Baer, see Ep 2087. As Allen indicates, Cochlaeus might well have wanted the opinion of Baer and Erasmus on the subject of communion 'in both kinds,' a topic featured prominently in the *Fasciculus* (n29 above) and so have sent that section of the book in manuscript.

33 See Epp 2090, 2149 introductions.

34 Ep 2105 n8

35 On the recommendation of Udalricus Zasius, Johann Sichard (d 1552), who had studied law in Freiburg, was appointed lecturer in Roman law at Basel

Believe me to be, dear Erasmus, the devoted admirer of your fame and merit, Johannes Cochlaeus

2121 / To Bernhard von Cles Basel, 14 March 1529

For Berhard von Cles, see Ep 2107. The letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum.*

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE BISHOP OF TRENT, GREETING

My lord bishop, I know it must seem quite inconsiderate of me to thrust a letter upon you at a time when you are nearly buried beneath a mountain of work.[1] But I shall be brief. Recently I sent a certain Polyphemus,[2] who is hardly more intelligent than Homer's Cyclops[3] and as big a drunkard,[4] to take to Hungary the little book that I dedicated to Mary.[5] He was keen to have this assignment and pushed and pressed me so strongly that I think the twelve gold pieces I gave him for the journey was a small price to pay for peace and quiet. Now I am sending the same volume to his serene Majesty King Ferdinand, whose name is mentioned in the book.[6] Would you use your best judgment and present the book to him on a suitable

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in 1523. In the following year he succeeded to the chair vacated by Claudius Cantiuncula. Sichard was also active in the editing and printing of literary and legal Latin manuscripts that he had found in monastic libraries. In 1530 he left Basel to complete his doctorate of laws at Freiburg (1531), and in 1535 he was appointed to a legal chair at the University of Tübingen, where he served with distinction until his death. There is little evidence of contact between him and Erasmus, and it is not known how he became acquainted with Cochlaeus.

2121

1 As a member of King Ferdinand's retinue at the imperial diet then meeting in Speyer
2 Felix Rex (Ep 2130), by whom Erasmus sent a letter of commendation to the bishop; Ep 2130:52, 59–61.
3 The grim one-eyed giant who was tricked by Odysseus; *Odyssey* 9
4 This is a reference to the colloquy *Cyclops, sive Evangeliophorus* 'Cyclops, or the Gospel-Bearer' (CWE 40 863–76), first printed in the Froben edition of March 1529, which is a dialogue between two of Erasmus' famuli, Cannius (Nicolaas Kan; Ep 1932) and Polyphemus (Felix Rex). In the colloquy, Cannius derides Polyphemus because his riotous life is in such stark contrast to the big book of the Gospels that he carries around with him.
5 *De vidua christiana*; see Ep 2100.
6 CWE 66 188, 257

occasion,[7] if you think that, amid such a sea of troubles, he has a free moment to interest himself in such things?

The courier who is carrying both the book and some letters[8] is Christoph von Carlowitz,[9] a young man of noble birth but completely free of all the vices from which his class so often suffers. He has been an intimate of my household, which has allowed me to know his qualities thoroughly. His knowledge of Latin is so fine that I would not be ashamed to yield him the palm, and he is no beginner in Greek; he possesses, moreover, a considerable knowledge of the law. To these gifts is added a rare sobriety and modesty. I have no doubt that there are many candidates seeking a place in the service of his serene Majesty, but I believe that few are this man's equal. So if, with your usual kindness, you would be pleased to introduce him to the king, I feel it will be no less a favour to the king than to the young man himself. If in your wisdom you decide otherwise, then do not let this commendation of mine trouble you.

Here we fare not as we would like, but as best we can. I wish God in his mercy would find some remedy other than war for our present ills, for that sort of remedy is worse than the disease itself. You will learn the rest of our news from Carlowitz, if you are kind enough to grant him an interview. May Christ's spirit be present at your diet and, working through you, may it calm the storm and bring us peace.[10] Farewell.

Basel, 14 March 1529

2122 / To Simon Pistoris

Basel, 14 March 1529

On Simon Pistoris (1489–1562), chancellor to Duke George of Saxony and a trusted supporter of Erasmus, see Ep 1125 n6. This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO SIMON PISTORIS, GREETING

I sent a courier to you whom I hired at my own expense;[1] I think he must have been with you, but he has not yet returned. Now Christoph von Carlowitz

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7 The bishop had already made arrangements for formal presentation; see Ep 2130:55–7.
8 Epp 2121–3, and others to Ferdinand and Johann Henckel; see Ep 2130:103–6.
9 Ep 2085
10 See Ep 2107 n1.

2122
1 Cf Ep 2120:3.

has provided me with an excuse for writing. On one or two earlier occasions I commended him somewhat hesitantly to your illustrious prince,[2] but always with some embarrassment about doing so. Now, however, after seeing him at close quarters as a member of my household and getting to know him well, I should not hesitate to commend him to any prince, and I would stake my life on this. He is an excellent Latinist, a fair Greek scholar, and well versed in the law. In addition, he is a man of sober judgment, affable manners, and totally free from any taint of guile or arrogance. In a word, he is not at all like the notorious Thraso.[3] Now he is compelled to abandon the Muses, whom he loves with all his heart, and take to the life of the court. He has great confidence in Duke George, his own prince; I too am optimistic, if you will be good enough to put your influence and position behind my commendation. I urge you most strongly to do so. Believe me, you will be doing a service to a worthy and appreciative young man, who will not forget it.

Basel, 14 March 1529

2123 / To Balthasar Merklin

Basel, 15 March 1529

Balthasar Merklin (Ep 1382 n8) spent most of his life in the diplomatic service of the Hapsburgs. From 1522 to 1527 he was with Charles V in Spain. In 1527, already bishop of Malta, he was appointed bishop of Hildesheim and coadjutor bishop of Constance. When the reigning bishop of Constance, Hugo von Hohenlandenberg, resigned in 1529, Merklin succeeded him, but his sudden death in 1531 prevented him from taking possession of his new see. He was at this point attending the imperial diet in Speyer.

The letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. Merklin's reply is Ep 2166.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE BISHOP OF HILDESHEIM, GREETING

My lord bishop, for a long time now I have admired your urbane and generous nature, and I am aware how deep is my debt to you for the singular favour you have shown me. But up to this time I have had no opportunity to express my gratitude in return. Now the chance has come in the shape of this young man, who is distinguished by the long line of his ancestors but

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2 See Epp 1924:42–8, 1983:54–6.

3 One of Erasmus' favourite derisive nicknames for Heinrich Eppendorf (Ep 2086). The insolent parasite Thraso is the protagonist of Terence's play of the same name.

even more by the outstanding qualities of his mind.[1] He is eager to make your acquaintance; if you will be pleased to get to know him, you will soon, I am sure, come to love him.

You will receive from him a full account of the state of affairs here,[2] as well as of my personal situation,[3] for it is not safe to commit anything to a letter. Some of those who are devotees of the new sects rage against me; on the other side are the theologians Béda and Cousturier,[4] who simply act like madmen, and finally there are the monstrous regiments of pseudomonks who have no more sense than the rest.[5] If I did not have the support of the princes, I would not be able to survive. The truth is that no villainy, from whatever quarter, will ever prevail on me to leave the fellowship of the church.[6]

I only wish that, just as the king's arrival has raised the hopes of all good men,[7] so it may, with the help of the spirit of Christ, calm this present storm. Farewell.

Basel, 15 March 1529

2124 / From Duke George of Saxony Dresden, 15 March 1529

The manuscript of this letter, in a secretary's hand but signed by the duke, is in the Rehdiger Collection Collection at the University Library in Wrocław. It was first published in LB III/2 1741–2 *Appendix epistolarum* no 349.

GEORGE BY THE GRACE OF GOD DUKE OF SAXONY,
LANDGRAVE OF THURINGIA, AND MARGRAVE OF MEISSEN

I send you greetings, most learned Erasmus, and the assurance of our grace and favour. I wrote to Heinrich Eppendorf and tried to dissuade him from disturbing your important work;[1] I was all the more distressed, therefore,

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2123

1 Carlowitz; see Epp 2121–2, and cf Ep 2166:1–2.
2 The disturbances leading to the triumph of the Reformation at Basel; Ep 2097 n1
3 His plans to leave Basel and settle elsewhere; Epp 2090 introduction, 2149 introduction
4 Ep 2082 nn56, 24
5 See Ep 2094.
6 See Ep 2082 n78.
7 King Ferdinand had come to Speyer to preside at the diet.

2124

1 See Ep 1929 n5.

when I read your letter and the appended note describing the course of the whole drama.[2] What could be more unfair than that you, a man made venerable by age and learning, should be attacked by someone like that? If I were in your place, good Erasmus, I would show myself no more worried by his shameless airs than by the proverbial fly that flutters past.[3] You realize what he is after in this quarrel: he hopes that if he fights you, by fair means or foul, he will gain a name throughout the world. With this ambition he has now become an actor with a mask, preferring to act the part rather than be an honest and noble person. Otherwise, what point was there in grasping at every pretext, in matters of no importance, to pick a quarrel with you, and then to draw up a pact over these imagined wrongs and with consummate effrontery demand that in some published work of yours you demonstrate that you are his friend?[4]

I should not wish to encourage you, however, to publish that appended note in which you summarize the actions taken by both parties,[5] for he certainly does not deserve to be known to posterity through you. Moreover, in that account much that was done and agreed to seems contrary to all that is fair or proper or consistent with your dignity, although I recognize throughout that moderate spirit which you always show in placating even the most hostile opponents. While I would dearly like to defend and vindicate you in this ill-matched squabble, yet when I observe that my own letter,[6] far from having any effect on him, only made him more fierce and truculent towards you, I would not want to aggravate the situation by my intervention. It is not my intention to invite the fellow back to this country in any capacity,[7] since I have already learned, not without risk to my good name and my interests, how unsafe it is to appoint people like that to public positions. It is not that I want to see him ruined. But since it is not in my power to cure him, whatever office he may hold, it is better that we let him go his own way. If at this point I were to appeal to you seriously for advice, I do not think you would advise me to engage a man like that.

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2 The 'appended note' (cf lines 19–20 below) may have been a draft of the *Admonitio adversus mendacium* (1530), which was Erasmus' own account of the controversy.

3 *Adagia* I v 66. For similar advice from the Saxon court, see Ep 2120:15–22.

4 See Epp 1941, 2086:28–42.

5 See n2 above.

6 See n1 above.

7 Cf Ep 1934:531–3.

You write that where you live the gospel party is becoming so strong that you and many other good people must consider moving.[8] Although it pains me greatly to hear this, and I wish that your advancing years would permit you to live here with us, yet you are not alone in being exposed to these cruel blows; you must endure a misfortune that is common to us all. If you were not already familiar with the pamphlets that fly back and forth from both sides, you would scarcely believe the unfair and baseless insults that Luther has again launched against me with the recent publication of his explosive rejoinder,[9] written with that very aim in mind. Since I see that the present age is not producing much greater wisdom, especially among the members of that sect, we must be patient with actions that are degrading or undeserved. We must make many concessions, indeed every concession, in the interests of Christian charity and the public peace, always provided that such good-natured acquiescence does not weaken our own cause. Farewell.

Dresden, 15 March 1529
George, Duke of Saxony, etc

2125 / To Francisco de Vergara

Basel, 17 March 1529

Francisco de Vergara (Ep 1876), the brother of Juan de Vergara (Ep 2133), was professor of Greek at Alcalá. Like his brother, he was an ardent Erasmian. This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO FRANCISCO DE VERGARA, GREETING

How very true is the old saying that 'Man is a bubble'![1] When you wrote to me, you were in lively form; now when you write again,[2] you are a sick man; when I received your letter, I was well enough, now I reply to it in a wretched state. I have been struck down with a most persistent cold accompanied by

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8 Ep 2097 n1

9 *Von heimlichen und gestolen brieffen ... widder Hertzog Georgen zu Sachsen* (Wittenberg: Hans Lufft 1529), which was the latest instalment in a bitter exchange of broadsides between Luther and Duke George that had begun with the Pack Affair of 1528 (Ep 1934 n80) and would drag on until 1533. Further details will be provided in the notes to Ep 2338 in CWE 16.

2125

1 *Adagia* II iii 48

2 None of Francisco Vergara's letters to Erasmus survive.

fever,[3] which is not without some risk to my life. This is how March has greeted me. Meanwhile, in spite of these troubles, I am busy planning to move, for I must flee the nest where I have felt at home for so many years. I am afraid that what happened to those saints, both male and female,[4] is an omen of what will happen one day to me also. Moreover, there is a silly but wonderfully persistent suspicion abroad that I am secretly in sympathy with the sects, although the more fanatical their followers are, the more bitterly they hate me. So to avoid this risk to my life, I must put my life at risk.

But to deal with your letter: if, my dear Francisco, sending a letter puts the recipient under as much obligation as a loan of money, you are my creditor, since you initiated this challenge with your long, learned, and friendly letter. Although I am aware that I owed you interest as well, I have hardly paid half the principal, returning letters in poor Latin for yours in splendid Greek,[5] that is, giving 'bronze for gold.'[6] If you are kind enough to give me credit for wanting to repay you (however inadequately), that too puts me under an obligation. Yet not only do you release the debtor, but you even profess your indebtedness to me. There was no need for you to make excuses, but if excuses must be made, I should prefer to have something to complain about to you rather than that you should have such a good reason for excusing yourself. What was the disease that was so stubborn and spiteful that it kept a young man, born for the support of learning, tied to his bed for more than a year?[7] I think, however, that you must have recovered some time ago, since your letter, written on 30 June at Madrid, reached me only in March.[8]

We live here, not as we wish, but as best we can; I fear that worse suffering lies ahead if men resort to arms, and so far the opening moves seem to point in that direction.[9] Both sides feel secure in their own strength, but the fortunes of war are uncertain. Would that Christ might appear as a *deus ex machina* and bring a happy ending to this drama. From now on,

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3 On about 15 March Erasmus came down with a cold that lasted until the end of the month; see Epp 2136:9–13, 2145, 2147:4–6, 2158:42–3.

4 Ie the smashing of their images in the outburst of iconoclasm that accompanied the introduction of the Reformation at Basel; see Ep 2097 n1.

5 Epp 1876, 1885

6 *Adagia* I ii 1; cf Homer *Iliad* 6.234–6.

7 See Ep 2004:52–6. (Allen mistakenly put '1876' for '2004.')

8 Ie nearly a year later; the letter was evidently sent with Epp 2003–4, both dated 29 June 1528, which Erasmus answered with Epp 2134, 2133 respectively.

9 See Ep 2173 n10.

dear Francisco, let us not compete by reckoning the number or the bulk of our letters, but only in the warmth of our feelings. If these are strong and lasting, it will not matter how brief and infrequent our letters are. I sincerely hope, however, that we can enjoy this added benefit of friendship. May the Lord keep you safe!

Basel, 17 March 1529

2126 / To Alfonso de Valdés [Basel], 21 March 1529

On Valdés, see Ep 2109. This letter, the response to one no longer extant, was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. In his reply, Ep 2198:1–2, Valdés assigns the date '2 March' to this letter, but then cites Erasmus to the effect that a copy of it had been dispatched at a later date. The careless repetition here of lines 187–9 in lines 226–8 could indicate that the surviving text of the letter is that of a hastily prepared copy of the letter originally sent.

It is clear from this letter that Valdés had included with his letter a copy of the original Salamanca edition (1528) of Luis de Carvajal's *Apologia* (Ep 2110 n10), together with the advice that Erasmus not respond to it. Erasmus, however, had already composed his *Responsio* based on the Paris edition of Carvajal's book (1529) and dispatched it to Frankfurt for the spring book fair. He now ran through the Salamanca edition, comparing it with the Paris reprint and noting the differences. The extract cited in line 11 is in the Paris edition, but all the others (lines 24–5, 29–30, 37–9, 42–3, 60–1) are evidently taken from the Salamanca edition. It is noteworthy that Erasmus is still uncertain of the nationality of the author. His initial surmise that he was a Spaniard (Ep 2110:29–30) has here been replaced by the suspicion that he was 'a native of Brabant or of Gelderland' (lines 106–7). It would take Valdés' response to this letter (Ep 2198) to clear up the confusion.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ALFONSO DE VALDÉS, GREETING

Your warning about Pantalabus was too late,[1] or (to be more precise) your letter[2] reached me too late – around the seventh of March – when I had already completed whatever was needed for the Frankfurt fair. The same

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2126

1 In his *Responsio adversus febricitantis cuiusdam libellum* (Ep 2110 n10), Erasmus referred to Carvajal as 'Pantalabus,' after the parasite in Horace *Satires* 1.8.11 and 2.1.22. In Horace the name is spelled 'Pantolabus.' Derived from two Greek words, it means 'Grab-all.'

2 Not extant; see Ep 2133:7–9.

book was issued secretly at Paris without the publisher's name. A copy was sent to me through friends a few days earlier. A preface, addressed to the cardinal general of the order,[3] had been added. They removed a few passages that they knew would harm them in the eyes of the French and be of assistance to me. I discovered this by collating the Spanish edition with the earlier one . From my letter to King Francis (a copy of which I enclose) they selected only 'He lies that the emperor is unfair.'[4] This the French reader would not understand. If they had said 'unfair terms,' he might even have approved it. What followed,[5] which was concerned with the colloquy *Puerpera* 'The New Mother,' was omitted entirely, since they knew it would be totally unacceptable to French ears. In that work Eutrapelus, to show that, with all the conflicts among the princes, God has enough to do without also acting as midwife, says jokingly, 'The emperor is making a new realm of the whole globe.'[6] The whole trouble lies with the word 'new,' as if there has ever been a supreme ruler of the whole world except God; even today the whole world is not yet known, and what is known has never answered to one man.

I am not arguing here about the absolute rule of the emperor. But I want you to understand the silliness of the arguments this fellow uses to assert the authority of the emperor. He says, 'What the sun is in the heavens, the emperor is on earth.' Those legal experts who have introduced this pointless kind of argument (and much else) make the pope the sun and the emperor the moon. I would accept the parallel, if just as the sun, in its tire-

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3 Francisco de Quiñones (d 1540), a relative and personal friend of Charles V. Educated at Alcalá and Salamanca, he joined the Franciscan Observants and rose to the rank of minister general of the entire order (1523–7) with headquarters in Rome. During his tenure as minister general, new branches of the Franciscan movement committed to special austerity (the Reformed, the Recollects, the Capuchins) came into being. In December 1527 he was elevated to the college of cardinals. Erasmus had no reason to suspect that Quiñones was behind Carvajal's attack.

4 These are not Erasmus' words. The charge is based on his letter to Francis of 16 June 1526 (Ep 1722:17–20): 'Although some people think the terms of the peace [of Madrid] harsh, not to say unfair, yet I trust that he who guides all human affairs . . .' Cf lines 206–22 below.

5 In the Salamanca edition

6 In the first edition of the colloquy (February 1526), this sentence read: 'Charles is making a new realm of the whole globe.' In the second edition (March 1529) Erasmus, fearing, for the reasons enumerated in this letter, that the sentence would offend the French, changed it to read: 'Charles is preparing to extend the boundaries of his realm.' See CWE 39 608 n8.

less motion, circles and illuminates and nurtures the whole world, so one man could look after all the several nations of the earth. Then he says, 'Aristotle prefers monarchy to aristocracy.'[7] He does, but only if one could find the best and wisest of rulers. By 'monarchy' Aristotle does not mean universal rule, but rule over a particular realm like that of the Cretans, or Spartans, or Athenians, etc. There is no reason why 'monarchy' should not be applied to a single town. As for the line they are fond of citing from Homer, 'The rule of many is a bad thing: let there be a single ruler,'[8] the poet is speaking of a general in command of a single army, whose power nonetheless is not absolute except in battle, the very point that Aristotle makes.[9] 'But,' he says, 'Christ also approved of the authority of Caesar: "Render unto Caesar" etc.'[10] If Christ had taught in Savoy and he had been shown a coin of the duke in similar circumstances, he would have said, 'Render unto the duke the things which belong to the duke.'

You see how sharp this fellow is, who boasts of his knowledge of logic, physics, and metaphysics. As I said, I am not discussing the merits of the case, but the fellow's crass stupidity. It does not surprise me that among the countless thousands of mankind there is someone who is rash enough to write such stuff. What is really surprising is that it is being published in various places by the Franciscans, who seem unaware of the extent to which they are exposing themselves to the scorn of good and learned men. Clearly, these people must either be particularly stupid or have a very low opinion of the human race. And what am I to say of the fabrication that we find throughout the work that I am the enemy of all true religion because here and there I pass judgment on the irreligious superstitions and impious practices of certain individuals? In his view, to teach and admonish is to hate, and to disagree is to defame. Then, he never quotes my words as they are written, but either lops something off or adds something. Moreover, he repeatedly twists my criticisms of three or four bad men to apply to a whole order. Again and again he uses the big lie that I make no distinction between the good and the bad, when in fact I hardly ever fail to do so. So this is that simple innocence of a proud order that had its source in Paradise![11] I think

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7 Aristotle discusses the relative merits of autocracy and other forms of government in book 3 of the *Politics*.

8 Homer *Iliad* 2.204

9 Aristotle *Politics* 3.14

10 Matt 22:21; Mark 12:17; Luke 20:24

11 In the bull *Exivi de paradiso* (6 May 1312), Pope Clement v gave his support to the 'the holy religion of the Friars Minor . . . of regular observance,' whose

I can guess who the author of the book is. He states that he was in England, France, Germany, and Spain, yet this does not prevent him from railing against people who roam the world.

Several months ago I was visited by a Franciscan, a young man of considerable ability, a fluent Latin speaker with a better than average knowledge of Greek and a natural gift of eloquence.[12] He began a dissertation on what the theologians and the monks were doing in France, then urged me to be warned in time, saying that he was one of those who spoke up for my interests. When he entered into this territory, I diverted him to other matters, partly because the warden of this place was present,[13] and partly because everything he was telling me I knew already, and more reliably, from the letters of my friends. However, I was impressed by his abilities and so decided to offer him the hospitality of my home for several months if he wished to avail himself of it. So I invited him to lunch on the following day. I did not invite the warden so that we would be freer to talk. He arrived, dragging along a companion, a man of advanced years, a regular Thraso,[14] whom he represented as a layman so that he would not have to speak Latin with me, (although, as I learned later, he was a priest).[15] I was so offended by this fellow's unattractive vanity that my affection for the young man chilled.

When lunch was over, he returned to the subject he had begun the day before, indicating that he planned to visit the various regions and make himself known to men of learning. He brought two brief letters of recommendation with him, one by Bade and the other by Budé, both clearly wrung from the writers. He demanded that I commend him to all my friends – he had learned what friends I had and where – and he seemed ready to go anywhere in the world if he had a recommendation from me. At this point I made many excuses, particularly that it would not be wise to introduce someone I did not know to men of such standing; for not infrequently this

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'heavenly form of life and rule' he described as a garden of Paradise 'distanced from the stormy waves of the world.' See *Annales Minorum seu trium ordinum a S. Francisco institutorum* ed Luke Wadding et al, 28 vols (Florence 1931–47) VI 227–8.

12 Lines 96–7 indicate that this visit may have taken place in the summer of 1527, while Erasmus was engaged in the final stages of making his will (CWE 12 540–50).

13 Ie the warden of the local Franciscan friary

14 The braggart soldier in Terence's *Eunuchus*

15 Observant Franciscans were required, in so far as possible, to be accompanied by another friar when they travelled outside their house. See Ep 1211 n18.

practice had got me into trouble in the past. When he pointed to the letters of recommendation as evidence, I read them aloud. They made it clear that these writers also did not know the fellow. He pressed me to commend him at least to two or three special friends. I refused to do so. Finally, he asked for a short letter, written to him in my own hand, which he could take around with him. I indignantly refused that also, for more than once I have been taken in by the tricks of vagabonds like that.

Meantime my servant announced the arrival of two learned men with whom I had business to do concerning my will, something which is very difficult to keep confidential here.[16] As I moved to meet them, he intercepted me, begging for some 'little charity' (for that was the expression he used).[17] My mind was elsewhere, so I said, 'I've already done that,' thinking he would return to me at a more convenient time. Two days later he was seen here in the city. He worked hard to scrape together a few coins, but he did not return to me. Unless I am mistaken in my suspicions, this book is his revenge for his disappointment, for that order has hardly anyone else who could speak Latin as well. He is not one of the so-called Observants, but of the Coletani,[18] as I learned later from a Franciscan. He is, if I am not mistaken, a native of Brabant or of Gelderland. No doubt he is now in Italy or in Hungary, on his way to completing his grand tour. Look how dangerous it is to deny those people anything. And this is the only person I have turned away without travel money, though I am frequently approached by the shabbiest of beggars.

I laughed at the nailing of the book to the cross.[19] This is a better way to win the battle than by writing apologies. It was the same at Louvain when, through the actions of a certain brother,[20] a copy of Lee's polemic against

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16 The language here is ambiguous. The verb *condere*, which has been translated as 'keep confidential,' can also mean 'to write down' (as in the case of a complicated legal document like a will). The principal concern in this instance would seem to be confidentiality. Bonifacius Amerbach wrote on his copy of the will: 'Not to be shown to anyone; it should sooner be burned.' See Allen VI 503 (Appendix 19 'Erasmus' First Will') introduction.

17 The word used was *eleemosynula*, a rare, perhaps invented, diminutive of the biblical word *eleemosyna* (eg Matt 6:2 Vulgate), from which the English word 'alms' is derived.

18 The Coletani were a male version of the female order of Poor Clares (Coletae) formed within the Franciscan order. The group did not flourish and it was officially suppressed by Leo X in 1517.

19 Actually, it was nailed to the public gibbet; see Ep 2163:129–30.

20 The Latin is *germanus quidam*, which is strange. *Germanus* means a 'blood brother' or 'a like-minded person,' not a brother in the sense of 'friar.' Capi-

me,[21] which he had arranged to be deposited in the Franciscans' library, was thoroughly smeared inside and out with human excrement. Readers entering the library wanted to know what the stink was, but despite a search into every nook and cranny nothing was found. Finally, someone with a better nose followed the direction of the smell and discovered its source. The warden wanted to show the book to the people and to hurl a blind thunderbolt at the perpetrator. All this happened, however, without my knowledge, nor did I know the identity of the author until I returned here.

Hermann, count of Neuenahr,[22] was upset at criticisms launched against him by the Dominican, Jacob of Hoogstraten.[23] Hoogstraten was a great rabbi,[24] prior of the magnificent and wealthy monastery at Cologne. The order was unable to restrain the man until Hermann's relatives announced to the Dominicans that henceforth they could not collect cheeses in any demesne belonging to the count or his family. Thinking this was an empty threat, they secretly tried to come as usual for eggs and cheeses. They were met with a terrible onslaught, and as a penalty were deprived of their privilege for a whole year. As a consequence, Jacob was forced by his fellows to accept peace terms.[25] I have his palinode,[26] in which he repeats the insulting language he had used in his attack on the count, while at the same time affirming and almost going so far as to state on oath that he had always held him in the highest regard. A splendid palinode indeed, more the work of a mountebank than a theologian![27]

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talized, it might mean 'German' or be the proper name 'Germain.' So it is not clear whether the defacing of Lee's book was done by a certain friar, a certain German, or someone named Germain. There is no other narrative of this incident against which to check the details.

21 See Ep 1037.

22 Ep 2137

23 Ep 1006

24 The Latin is *rabinus*, a term often used ironically by Erasmus of masters and doctors of theology; see eg Ep 1334 n26, the prefatory letter to the *Paraphrase on Matthew* CWE 45 9 n12, and *Apologia adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos* LB IX 1090A. In the case of Hoogstraten, the use of the term is particularly ironic given his leading role in the prosecution of Reuchlin for having opposed Johann Pfefferkorn's campaign for the destruction of Hebrew books (Ep 290:11n).

25 This is a story that Erasmus told and retold with relish many times; see Ep 877:18–35, 1173:147–62, 1892:59–65, *Adagia* IV vii 64.

26 Ie his retraction, which is not extant

27 Cf CWE 36 324–5.

It seems to be my fate, dear Valdés, that no one causes me greater grief than those supporters of mine who have more zeal than sense. Someone in Paris issued an anonymous letter in my defence.[28] That simply drove Béda into such a frenzy that once again he spewed forth his usual bile all over me. Similarly, a letter from someone in your part of the world stirred up the pseudomonks, who pressed into service their wretched spokesman Pantalabus.[29] I never would have had any trouble with the theologians of Paris, had not the enthusiasm of a certain Berquin, an ardent, but imprudent, supporter, not provoked them to attack me – to his sorrow as well as mine.[30] He is a man guided by brave, but disastrous, counsels.

There was the usual academic tomfoolery over the banning of the *Colloquies*.[31] A certain Colines, I am told, printed as many as 24,000 copies of the book in a pocket edition, but elegantly produced.[32] He was inspired not by any enthusiasm for me, but by the desire for profit, for (not to beat about the bush) there was nothing in people's hands except the *Colloquies*. Publication was preceded by a rumour, perhaps sedulously put about by the printer, that the work was going to be banned. That excited the interest of buyers. So Béda, having obtained a rector of his own stamp,[33] called together his henchmen and passed the edict, which strictly applies to the statutory lectures in the colleges required for progress towards a degree. The fact that grammar is taught in all the colleges is the result of the quest for profit and is highly detrimental to learning.[34] They play tricks of this sort quite often.

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28 In the preface (October 1528) to his *Apologia adversus clandestinos Lutheranos* (Ep 2110 n8) fols vi–vii, Béda attributes his decision to write, not to a letter but to two books in defence of Erasmus (for one of them, see Ep 1875 n30). He attributed them to Pierre Caroli and Louis de Berquin, neither of whom would admit the charge.

29 See Ep 2198 n6.

30 On Louis de Berquin, his trials for heresy, and his execution, see Ep 2188.

31 See Ep 2037 introduction.

32 Cf Ep 1875 n27. The printer was Simon de Colines, who published the *Colloquies* in both 1526 and 1527, copying the latest Froben edition in both cases. The printing was in a pocket-sized format known as 24°, which may explain Erasmus' improbable estimate of a printing of 24,000 copies.

33 See Ep 2037 n23.

34 Erasmus' point here is more fully developed in *De recta pronuntiatione* (Ep 1949), the revised and enlarged second edition of which was soon to be published (Epp 2200:43–4, 2209). Young men, he said, should not be admitted to university until they have thoroughly mastered grammar via school instruction or private tuition. As it is, the universities, in order to raise their income, admit students who can barely read, offer them hasty and inadequate instruction in grammar, and then hurry them on to 'sophistic and dialectic' before

The edict, however, makes no mention of heresy. They must, I suppose, be worried by my bad Latin, or they do not want authors more worth reading to be removed from students' hands and replaced by this kind of study. But they had been responsible for a graver rumour in Saxony, that in France six bishops, under the leadership of the archbishop of Rouen,[35] had been appointed to report on heretical books, and that my books had been condemned by them and burned in public, to a value calculated at fifty thousand crowns.[36] By such schemes the stupid class of monks is confident of victory.

They pin their hopes on another stratagem. In every region they have Franciscans of the Observance – for these still have some respect on account of a certain appearance of piety; these men in sermons and public addresses regularly disparage the good name of Erasmus. In Paris they have Petrus de Cornibus,[37] in Savoy Jean Gachi,[38] who, however, after I complained about

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plunging them headlong into 'the mysteries of theology.' This neglect of 'the most serious training of all' in favour of more prestigious subjects is the root of much trouble; see CWE 26 380–1.

35 Georges (II) d'Amboise (1488–1550). This is the only reference to him in Erasmus' correspondence, and this letter is the only known report of the rumour in question.

36 If this reference is to the new English double-rose crowns (struck from November 1526), each worth 5s 0d or 60d sterling, this amount would have been worth £12,500 sterling, an enormous sum – the equivalent, for a master mason at Cambridge, of 500,000 days' wages or (at 210 days per year) 2,381 years' wage income. Possibly, however, these are instead the comparable current French gold coins, *écus à la couronne au soleil*, which were worth somewhat less, about 4s 8d (56d) sterling, and 40s or £2 tournois. Even so, that would still be the very substantial sum of about £11,667 sterling. See CWE 14 'The Coinages and Monetary Policies of Henry VIII' 476 Table 3, which provides the pure gold contents of these two gold coins. Note from this table, however, that, while the English coinage ordinance of 22 August 1526 assigned a sterling value of 54d to the French *écu au soleil*, the next ordinance of 5 November 1526, authorizing debasement of the silver coinage, assigned no official values to foreign coins. But we may estimate that the market value of foreign gold coins rose proportionately, so that we may assign a current value of 56d to the French *écu au soleil*. For a further justification of assigning a value of 56d sterling to the French *couronne au soleil*, see Ep 2153 n4. For the post-1526 coin values see also CWE 12 650 Table 3D.

37 Petrus de Cornibus (d 1549), warden of the Paris Franciscan convent from at least 1528 to 1532, was a renowned preacher who served on committees of the faculty of theology and (from 1534) advised the Parlement of Paris on matters of faith. He was much given to linking Erasmus' name with that of Luther (see eg Allen Ep 2205:214–17).

38 See Ep 1891 to Gachi, whose reply (cf line 174) is not extant.

him in a letter to the duke,[39] swore solemnly in his reply to me that he had never mentioned the name of his mentor Erasmus except (as was proper) in the most complimentary terms. In England they have John Standish, now a bishop.[40] In Louvain there is Titelmans,[41] a young man, very self-important, as his earliest efforts reveal. I only wish his talents were a match for his pretensions. There are others in Poland and Hungary;[42] they never make any progress except for the worse. Everywhere their tyranny is in decline. They would be better Christians if they turned to the practice of true piety and abandoned their hypocrisy, which is already all too well known.

I received thirty florins in February. I had written to Bartholomäus Welser and took the opportunity to advise him of the two hundred ducats.[43] He replied that he had not yet received them and assured me that as soon as they reached him, he would attend to the matter. Around the seventh of March a bundle of letters arrived, each in two copies.[44] I have entrusted Hieronymus Froben with a second document, so that he can take possession of the money at Frankfurt.[45]

I am well aware how much I owe you, dear Alfonso, my generous friend, for your devotion never fails. The friendly tone of the archbishop's letter brought me much greater pleasure than the money itself.[46] I am delighted that the scruples I had about the dedication have been removed.[47] I shall venture to dedicate the edition to him, although neither he nor you mention this; and I think it better to dedicate the whole work to one man rather than to two, unless you advise me otherwise. I shall send you the ten volumes, that is, a complete set; I shall send a second set to the archbishop of Toledo, a third to the archbishop of Seville,[48] a fourth to Gattinara,[49] unless

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39 Ep 1886
40 Erasmus means Henry Standish, bishop of St Asaph, whom he considered an ignoramus and an enemy (Ep 608:15n).
41 Frans Titelmans (Epp 1823, 1837A)
42 Cf Ep 1823:17–18 and Allen Ep 2205:256–7.
43 On Welser and the financial transactions referred to here, see Epp 2109 nn9 and 10, 2153.
44 Valdes' letter was one of them (see lines 1–2 above); for another, see Ep 2133:1.
45 Froben was at the Frankfurt book fair; see Ep 2112:30. The Latin term translated as 'document' is *syngrapha*, concerning which see Ep 2109 n9. Here the reference is to a holograph document authorizing Froben to collect on Erasmus' behalf the gift of two hundred ducats that Fonseca had sent him. Cf lines 224–37 below.
46 Ep 2003:94–5; cf Ep 2004:38–41.
47 Ie the dedication of Augustine to Alonso de Fonseca; see Ep 2109 n8, 2133:57–60.
48 Fonseca (Toledo), Manrique (Seville)
49 The imperial chancellor (Ep 1150, 1643)

you disagree. The work will be completed by the next autumn fair. I must move from this place, though that is not without some immediate danger to my life. But we must yield to destiny.

I am enclosing the whole text of my letter to King Francis.[50] This was the letter that gave Pantalabus a handle with which to blacken my name by alleging that according to me the king had broken the agreement. In fact, in the letter I try to comfort the king so that he would bear his bad fortune with moderation and embrace the peace. I had no doubt that the king thought the terms severe, for it was in that sense that I used the term *iniquas*[51] to offer solace to his spirits; so speaking not in my own voice but in that of others, I wrote, 'Although this peace will seem to some' etc.[52] I also point to the hope that Christ may bring about a happier state, for he can turn tragedy into peace and tranquillity, even sending calamity upon those he loves, because in his inscrutable wisdom he knows that this is for the best. Then I exhort the king to stand by the agreement: 'If Christian monarchs' etc. And this is the passage from which my opponent demonstrates that all the disasters suffered in or around Rome should be blamed on me, although no one could foresee that tragedy, not even the emperor himself. These people don't understand the purpose of the writer, and since they are ignorant of the sense of Latin words, they often slander me. For example, in this passage he thinks that *iniquum* has no meaning other than 'unjust,' although *aequitas* 'equity' implies a tempering of the law out of feelings of humanity; what is 'entirely reasonable' [*aequissimum*] could be far removed from justice, and what is 'entirely just' may not be reasonable. Perhaps it would be a good idea if that letter were printed to shame these people who take princes for credulous fools,[53] not human beings.

I had commended Frans van der Dilft to you,[54] but whether he has reached you, I cannot make out clearly from your letter. I sent a second document to Frankfurt with Hieronymus Froben, with my 'quittance,' as they call it.[55] I added in writing that if it was not satisfactory, Hieronymus would sign in my name whatever kind of document was desired. Welser's agent

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50 Ep 1722; cf lines 10–11 above.

51 *Iniquas* (from *iniquus*) can mean both 'harsh' and 'unjust.' Erasmus' intention was to say that some people thought the terms of the peace harsh. His opponent twisted this to mean that Erasmus himself thought the terms 'unjust.' The opposite of *iniquus* in Latin is *aequus*, meaning both 'just' and 'reasonable.'

52 See Ep 1722:18–21.

53 Literally 'mushrooms,' an expression frequent in Latin comedy for 'a credulous fool'; see *Adagia* IV i 38.

54 See Ep 2109 n2.

55 Cf lines 183–5 above.

explained apologetically that this was a particular kind of document and that no money could be paid out unless I had first supplied him with a quittance in three copies.[56] He could, however, accept these from Hieronymus. But he would rather defer payment. So I wrote to Bartholmäus Welser in Augsburg and asked him to accommodate me in this matter if he could.[57] They say the money has not been paid to the bankers, but to a merchant, who solicits this favour from the bankers on the condition that they are free to withdraw it. Meanwhile the merchant has use of the money. I remember that some time ago I was fooled in England by a similar kind of document. I fear I shall not receive a cent in the coming year, although I have already divided more than that amount among those who looked up texts in various libraries and collated them and made notes so that I could make a proper judgment.[58]

I am sincerely grateful, dear Valdés, for all the support you have given to the bookseller on my behalf.[59] Please continue to use your kind endeavours until the matter is completed. They complain that three months is very little time. It is a long journey and not very safe. Before they get their merchandise delivered, the day is over and things become dangerous. There are no signs yet of war, and if there were, works of scholarship still deserve some special consideration. There is nothing to fear from these men. They are German by birth and have nothing in mind except to get the means to support their wives and children. I have written on the same subject to Master Mercurino, the chancellor.[60] Please pass this letter on to him, if you think it would be helpful. Farewell.

21 March 1529

2127 / To Juan de Valdés Basel, 21 March 1529

On Juan de Valdés, younger brother of Alfonso de Valdés (Ep 2109), see Ep 1961.

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56 The term for 'quittance' (*quietantia*) in this sentence is *syngrapha quietantiaria*; cf Ep 2109 n9.

57 The letter is not extant, but in his reply Welser (Ep 2153:2) gives 6 April as the date, which doubtless means that he had received a duplicate.

58 Cf Epp 2133:63–6, 2134:268–70. Maarten Lips had helped (Epp 1473 n5, 1547, 1837). So had Sigismundus Gelenius (Ep 1702 n1) and Conradus Goclenius (Epp 1778, 1890, 1899).

59 According to Allen, probably a representative of Froben, who was trying to get an imperial privilege for the edition of Augustine. For similar efforts to get a French privilege, see Epp 2053:16–17, 2075:1–5.

60 Gattinara; see n49 above.

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this letter is contemporary with other letters sent at this time to Spain. Since three of these (Epp 2125, 2133–4) answer letters from Madrid dated 29–30 June 1528, it could be that Valdés' letter, which is not extant, was of the same date.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JUAN DE VALDÉS, GREETING

Just as I was deeply distressed to hear that my dear Valdés was beset by so many pains and perils, so I was delighted by the news in your letter that after the shipwreck you had got safely to shore.[1] Now I am troubled to learn of the many ills that afflict your native Spain. If only God would turn the hearts of kings to the love of peace!

From now on, my dear young man, do not worry about apologizing for your silence. Let this be agreed between us, that when I write to your brother, my letter will also be for you, and when he replies to me, that reply will also be from you, for since you are so close,[2] I think of you as one person, not two.

You say that you count that hasty little note of mine[3] among your special treasures. I in turn regard your warm and affectionate nature too highly, dear Juan, to want to store it among my precious possessions; instead I shall keep it always locked in the repository of my heart.[4]

I cannot but be delighted that I have so many devoted well-wishers in your country. On the other hand, it is distressing that your own region, which is otherwise so fortunate, has so many nests crowded with the most irritating wasps.[5] These people cause such dreadful trouble – not just for me, but for all my friends – that I almost suffer more from your country's predicament than my own. I offer my sincere congratulations to you and to

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2127

1 This is an allusion to the difficulties that had arisen from the publication of Valdés catechism, *Diálogo de doctrina cristiana*, in January 1529 (cf Ep 1961 introduction). The work was almost immediately denounced to the Inquisition, which sent it to be examined by a committee of theologians at the University of Alcalá, then still a hotbed of Erasmian sentiment. Generally speaking, the same people who had come to Erasmus' defence in 1527 now came to the defence of Valdés, and he was quickly cleared of the charges. See John E. Longhurst *Erasmus and the Spanish Inquisition: The Case of Juan de Valdés* (Albuquerque 1950) 35–46.

2 The Latin is *tam gemellos* 'so twin-like.' Cf Ep 1961:4–6, where the word is simply *gemellos* 'twins,' an ambiguity that led Allen to the untenable conclusion that Alfonso and Juan were in fact twins.

3 Ep 1961

4 Erasmus owes the phrase to Jerome Ep 77.7.

5 Ie the mendicant orders whose members had accused Erasmus of heresy; see Ep 2094.

all who, like you, are directing their labours and their whole energy towards reuniting elegance of language with a genuine Christian faith. We have not seen many attempts of this kind in Italy.[6] But what is learning, if piety is missing? Farewell.

Basel, 21 March 1529 25

2128 / From Daniel Stiebar Frankfurt, 21 March 1529

The autograph of this letter was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It was first published as Ep 100 in Förstemann/Günther. Stiebar's reply is Ep 2161.

On Stiebar, the young Franconian nobleman who was studying in preparation for an administrative career in the ecclesiastical principality of Würzburg and had spent a month in Erasmus' household in the summer of 1528, see Ep 2069 introduction. Stiebar was currently en route from Paris to Würzburg via Antwerp, Louvain, and Frankfurt. In the winter of 1529–30 he matriculated at Freiburg and live for some months in Erasmus' house. His career as a canon at Würzburg got under way in the spring of 1530. He was regularly entrusted with the diplomatic business of the principality, which he several times represented at meetings of the imperial diet. A moderate in religion who established a relationship of trust with Philippus Melanchthon at the Diet of Augsburg in 1530, his friendly relations with Erasmus continued until the latter's death.

If you are well, that is good; I keep well myself.[1] Recently when I was leaving Louvain,[2] the learned Goclenius gave me a letter for you.[3] I handed it over to Froben to attend to. Besides this I have no other excuse for writing. I hesitate to trouble you with an account of the misfortune that befell me in

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6 Allen refers this to Erasmus' old complaints against the members of the so-called Roman Academy (eg Ep 1341A:527–66), but the critics at whom Erasmus aimed the *Ciceronianus* (Ep 1948) would seem to be the more immediate target.

2128

1 This is a Latin formula (*Si vales, bene est; ego valeo*) frequently found in Cicero's letters but not often imitated in the correspondence of Erasmus.

2 On 27 January Stiebar had written to Bonifacius Amerbach from Antwerp that he was going on to Louvain 'within the next six days' and that his address there would be 'c/o Goclenius'; AK Ep 1324:38.

3 Not extant. It must have been dated before Erasmus' letter of c 22 February reached Louvain. See Ep 2161 nn2, 14.

Antwerp.[4] But by the mercy of God I have recovered. I see that you too are tossed on a rolling sea of troubles.[5] I am sorry for your plight and for the plight of the Muses – and not without reason. As for the others, some day they will get the punishment they deserve. I wish I could show how eager I am to help, whether you stay where you are or decide to leave, for I heard in Brabant that this is what you have in mind. But you, in your wisdom, will know what best serves your needs.

I am leaving for Würzburg and plan to stay there for some time. If my services can be of any help to you, just say the word. If I do not faithfully provide the help I promised, I have no desire to make a case for myself with words.[6] You can send me a letter through Joachim Camerarius in Nürnberg and let me know what assistance you would like me to give.[7]

This is all I can say at present. But let me add this, that Philippus Melanchthon has set out with his prince for Speyer.[8] My best wishes to you, Erasmus, glory of the world of letters; and do keep me always in your heart.

Frankfurt, 21 March 1529

Your friend, Daniel Stiebar

Dear kind Erasmus, up to today I have received no letters from you. If you have a moment to spare, please write to me.

To the distinguished Erasmus of Rotterdam, my respected teacher. In Basel

2129 / From Viglius Zuichemus

Dôle, 23 March 1529

This is Zuichemus' reply to Ep 2111. It was first published in *Historia episcopatuum foederati Belgii* ed Hugo Franciscus van Heussen (Louvain 1719) vol 2 iv. iii.

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4 He was assaulted and his throat cut. See lines 1–32 of the letter to Amerbach cited in n2 above.

5 See Ep 2097 n1.

6 Ie to seek to compensate with words for the inadequacies of his actions. Cf Virgil *Georgics* 3.289.

7 On Joachim Camerarius, who was now rector of the city school in Nürnberg, see Ep 1501 introduction.

8 As a member of the Saxon delegation to the diet, which Elector John (Ep 1670) attended in person. Since Luther, as an imperial outlaw under the terms of the Edict of Worms of 1521, could not leave Saxon territory, it fell to his younger colleague Melanchthon to be the elector's theological adviser at meetings of the diet and to represent Saxony in attempts at a negotiated settlement of the religious division in the Empire.

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

Even though I felt deeply embarrassed at my brashness in daring to send you a letter,[1] I a mere nobody and you the prince of scholars, yet I am delighted by the outcome, which far exceeds my expectations. Nothing more delightful could have happened to me than to find that my letter, for all its gaucheness, found some favour with you. Indeed, just when I was looking for someone to intercede with you to forgive my impudence, you appear on the scene, showing such kindness and generosity that what I sought to excuse you not only accepted with a good grace but even thought worthy of praise. You are such a gentle critic of my blunder that I hardly know how to contain myself or how to respond to your kindness. Then again your invitation to share the hospitality of your home in accordance with an ancient law of friendship fills me with confusion and embarrassment that you should see fit to offer such generous testimony of your good will towards me. I would be a most brazen wretch if I asked for any further pledge of your kindness, so generously volunteered. This action of yours leaves me no room for imagining that I could ever do full justice to your beneficence; for when I realize how ill equipped I am to thank you for so great a kindness, I am overcome with confusion. If my fortune matched my feelings and I could do everything I wished, I would make clear by my actions how highly I think of Erasmus.

My uncle Bucho,[2] who once enjoyed a close acquaintance with you, gave me the same advice: that I should try to gain some reputation in humane letters. I cannot tell you how happy I was to hear the same message from you. I shall not give up until I accomplish what both of you desire for me.

But why, I ask, is your friend Ornithoplutus[3] likely to be hanged? May all who disturb your peace of mind by such madness be dispatched in the same way! That other creature[4] cannot have a long life, since besides his physical ailments he is not quite sound in mind. Think how by taming

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2129

1 Ep 2101, answered by Ep 2111

2 Cf Ep 2101:33–5.

3 A parody of Heinrich Eppendorf's first name, achieved by combining two Greek words meaning 'fowl' (*Hahn*) and 'riches' (*reich*), yielding *Hahn/reich*. Erasmus had already referred to Eppendorf by that name in a passage inserted into *Adagia* I ix 44 in the edition of 1528 (CWE 32 205). Cf Ep 1934 n35. For Erasmus' parody of Eppendorf's surname, see Ep 2111 n3.

4 Ludovicus Carinus; see Ep 2111 n2.

monsters of this kind you are raised to the skies, and the glory of your name shines even brighter still. Is it not true that Hercules' merits would have remained unknown had they not been put to the test by so many labours?

I congratulate our friend Haio most sincerely on his good fortune in being able to enjoy your company every day.[5] It is my earnest prayer that he may long and diligently maintain that friendship by serving and supporting you in every way. The love I feel for you has this quality about it, that it wants to spread to your other admirers. So now that I have been welcomed into your warm and loving embrace, I am not content unless I bring others with me to share it. Farewell.

23 March 1529

2130 / From Felix Rex Speyer, 23 March 1529

The autograph of this letter, which was first published as Ep 102 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

Felix Rex of Ghent (Ep 2068 n1) appears to have been employed for a time by the Froben press before he entered the service of Erasmus as a famulus in 1528. Rex may already have assigned himself the nickname Polyphemus ('many-voiced' or 'much spoken of') as a way of displaying his knowledge of languages (Ep 2071:4–8). Since Homer's Polyphemus was one of the Cyclopes, and Rex seemed to be no wiser and no less bibulous than his namesake, Erasmus also thought of him as a Cyclops (Ep 2121:3–5). In the autumn of 1528 Rex carried letters for Erasmus to the Low Countries (see Epp 2068, 2071–2); in December of that year he was dispatched to Alsace (Ep 2081); and in February 1529 he was sent off to Franche-Comté. There, in Besançon, he came to blows with Ludovicus Carinus, who then tried to have him arrested in Dôle as well as in Basel (Epp 2101, 2112). To avoid further trouble, Erasmus in early March sent Rex off on another mission to deliver copies of *De vidua christiana* to Mary of Hungary and King Ferdinand (Epp 2110, 2121). From Speyer, where he found King Ferdinand, Rex sent this jaunty and somewhat schoolboyish letter to Erasmus. He then proceeded to Mary's court at Znoymo in Moravia to deliver her copy of the book, arriving near the end of May.

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5 Haio Camminga; see Ep 2108:13–14

Cordial greetings. Let me tell you, my learned teacher, the whole saga of my journey. I reached Bamlach on the first day,[1] which went well but was not very pleasant. On the second day, which was as successful as I could possibly wish, I got to Neuenburg. (In a village named Schliengen I was met by a German count with a strong escort of horse, who told me that King Ferdinand was in Speyer.[2] With this advice I abandoned Freiburg and went straight to Neuenburg, a little town three miles from Basel.[3]) Here at the suggestion of the mayor and the schoolmaster I waited a day or two for a ship to take me down to Speyer. I heartily commend to you, my dear master, the burgomaster of Neuenburg, who on hearing the name of Erasmus gave me two flagons of wine.[4] I also commend the schoolmaster of the town; he is absolutely straight and very fond of Erasmus, and he treated your Faustus with the greatest respect,[5] even to the point of inviting him to his home. You had written that I should not spend too long in the neighbourhood. I would have taken your advice if the printer Cratander had not made such irresponsible statements about me.[6] I wanted to meet the man, and I did so at Breisach and travelled with him by boat to Speyer. He did not dare to utter a word against me; in fact during the whole journey we talked pleasantly in a light-hearted way without making any mention of that snake Carinus.[7] To tell you the truth, when I left Cratander, he said, 'All the best, my dear Faustus, and please, not too much kidding.' It is not by chance that one says in our vernacular tongue, 'A dog dares most on its own dunghill.'[8] Froben advised me not to mention Carinus in Cratander's presence, and I obeyed. On leaving Neuenburg, I went to Breisach, where I found Doctor Fabri;[9] he told me that King Ferdinand and the bishop of Trent[10] were at Speyer.

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2130

1 Rex was following the post road from Basel to Freiburg.
2 Presiding at the imperial diet
3 Neuenburg am Rhein was in fact about twenty English miles downriver from Basel, ie about half way to Freiburg.
4 The burgomaster of Neuenburg was Leonhard Fuchs, Bonifacius Amerbach's father-in-law; cf Ep 2179 n2.
5 On Faustus as a substitute for Felix, see n38 below.
6 Andreas Cratander (Ep 1374 n19) had evidently taken sides with Carinus.
7 Ep 2111 n2
8 'Eenen hont es staut vp zynen messync,' a Dutch version of the Latin proverb *Gallus in suo sterquilinio plurimum potest* 'A cock has most power on its own dunghill.' See *Adagia* IV iv 25, where Erasmus gives the classical proverb, taken from Seneca, and then notes the contemporary canine variant.
9 Johannes Fabri (Ep 2097), Ferdinand's minister and Erasmus' friend
10 Bernhard von Cles (Ep 2107)

I made my way with all speed to Speyer, where I was unable to find an inn on the first night; every place was filled with people from the court. On the following day I met Johann von Vlatten,[11] a most distinguished and learned man, to whom a little while ago you dedicated the *Ciceronianus*.[12] There was nothing mean or ordinary about the hospitality he provided for your Faustus, indeed (to tell you the honest truth) he entertained me right royally for around ten days. He could not have treated Erasmus himself more magnificently. I presented him with the *Colloquies* printed together with the enlarged and revised *Ciceronianus*,[13] and I also gave him the *Selectae epistolae*[14] and the *Response* to Alberto Pio.[15] In return for this little favour, he gave me silver money to the value of one gold piece (*aureus*).[16] No one could be warmer or friendlier or more generous than he. I cannot tell you, sir, the extent of his affection for you. If he had had a large house, he would not have allowed me to put up at an inn to sleep. He treated your friend Faustus with such kindness that one might take him for kindness itself. He has a young brother,[17] a man of many talents and a great admirer and supporter of yours, whom I commend to you most earnestly. He deserves the highest commendation, for he is frank and open, without any pretence about him. Indeed I would go further and say that he does not even know what pretence is, so frank and open is his nature. This promising and erudite young man treats me in the most affectionate manner. I cannot write a proper encomium of him, sir, since my words would prove inadequate to the task.

But to return to your friend Vlatten, who made me a welcome guest. He commended me strongly to the court, and in particular, put all my business in the hands of a nobleman who dines with him every day and is a great admirer of yours. He conducted me to the court of the bishop of Trent and commended me to him strongly. I gave the bishop your letter,[18] which pleased him very much. He told me to return in a day or two, which I did, and I presented his Lordship with the *Christian Widow* and the *Selectae*

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11 Ep 2088
12 Ep 1948
13 Basel: Froben, March 1529
14 Ep 2021 introduction
15 Ep 2108 n10
16 Evidently a significant sum of money in silver coin worth the value of some (unnamed) gold coin (the gold to silver ratio was about 12:1)
17 Werner von Vlatten (d 1573), who seems to have spent his life in the shadow of his brother, whom he succeeded as scholaster of the chapter of St Mary's at Aachen in 1541
18 Ep 2107

epistolae. He thanked me kindly for the gift. But he asked me to have a second copy bound as soon as possible to present to King Ferdinand. I did so, and we went together to see the king, to whom I gave a gilt copy of the *Christian Widow*. He thanked me for the gift and appointed me an archer.[19] The most reverend bishop said to his Majesty the king, 'Your serene Majesty, the learned theologian Erasmus has strongly commended his servant to me, that I may commend him to your Majesty.' The king replied, 'Is there anything I would not gladly do for my mentor Erasmus'?[20] The king ordered the right reverend bishop as well as his chamberlain[21] to say to the captain of archers that if there was a vacant place in the company of archers, I should have it; if not, I should be first in line. They approached the captain (who is a fellow countryman of mine and a twin brother of Brother Gabriel, a Carthusian, one of the Carthusians outside Brussels) and said to him, 'Captain, sir, the king has appointed Erasmus' servant an archer. If there is a place, he is to be enrolled; in fact you should go and speak to the king as soon as possible.' Need I go on? The captain, on hearing the name of Erasmus, was very excited and said, 'What would I not do for Erasmus, who has the deepest respect for my twin brother, who is with the Carthusians outside Brussels. There is no vacancy at present, but there will be within a few days, and he shall have it.' The king spoke to the captain and gave orders for my enrolment at the earlier possible opportunity. My dear master, I am grateful to your Reverence for your recommendation, and always will be as long as I live. If there is anything you would like to be done on your behalf, just give the command. I beg you, if possible, to send the captain of archers a letter of recommendation for me. He understands Latin and is very fond of you. He heartily commends his twin brother Gabriel to you.[22]

I have had the letter for Alfonso de Valdés sent on to Spain.[23] I gave it to Doctor Wolfgang Brantner,[24] counsellor to his imperial Majesty. He him-

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19 From Ep 2112:37–8, it appears that Rex had been angling for this appointment for some time. Cf lines 129–32 below.

20 The idea of Erasmus as Ferdinand's *praeceptor* appears to go back to his having had passages from the *Institutio principis christiani* read to him daily by his personal physician as a boy. Erasmus at the time resisted pressure to play a more active role in young Ferdinand's education. See Ep 917 introduction.

21 Gabriel de Salamanca (Ep 2096 n6)

22 Quite likely Gabriël Ofhuys (d 1535), a Carthusian of Brussels and an ardent admirer of Erasmus (Ep 1239). The name of the twin who was Ferdinand's captain of archers is unknown.

23 Possibly a copy of Ep 2126. Cf Ep 2198:1–3.

24 After becoming a doctor of laws at Bologna (1516), Wolfgang Brantner of Carinthia (d 1541) entered the chancellery of Maximilian I and subsequently

self told me that when you wish to write to Spain, you should send your letters to Speyer and he will personally send them on. He is a daily guest at Master Johann von Vlatten's house. The right reverend bishop of Trent wrote a letter to the widow of Hungary,[25] in which he commended me to her. Caspar Velius is not at Ferdinand's court; he has stayed over in Vienna.[26] The widowed queen is not far from Vienna. Philippus Melanchthon is at Speyer with the duke of Saxony;[27] he plans to write at length to you through Froben.[28] I was with him at dinner.

My excellent master, I am delighted that you have left Basel.[29] I met a great number of nobles at the king's court, and I did not find a single one who would oppose you. All treat you with the greatest respect, saying, 'We owe everything to Erasmus.' And King Ferdinand and all the princes are genuinely pleased that you have left Basel and moved to Freiburg. Dearest teacher, the monks have a very bad reputation at court, especially among learned courtiers. Doctor Fabri[30] has written to the widow of Hungary. Doctor Moer is badly put out that you did not dedicate Lactantius' *De opificio Dei* to him.[31] I replied that Erasmus had not been able to find Moer's name among his papers. If he had, I know he would not have dedicated it to someone else. 'I have no doubt,' I said, 'that he will make amends with another book.'

I spoke to Carlowitz and had dinner with him.[32] He said little to me about your Reverence except that he had a letter for the king and a gilt copy of *De vidua*, the same work that I had given to the king. He had a letter for

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became secretary and counsellor to Charles v. In December 1527 he was appointed counsellor to King Ferdinand for Carinthia.

25 Queen Mary (Ep 2100)

26 Rex was carrying a letter to Caspar Ursinus Velius; see Allen Ep 2313.

27 See Ep 2128:18–19 with n8.

28 No such letter from Melanchthon is extant.

29 This is a literal translation of the Latin (cf lines 94–5 below). The letter, however, is addressed to Erasmus at Basel; so Rex must have known, at least by the time he sent off the letter, that Erasmus had not yet left Basel for Freiburg.

30 See n9 above.

31 After legal studies at Cologne, Hartmann Moer (d 1537) entered the service of Archbishop Hermann von Wied (Ep 1976) c 1520. In 1521, he was appointed an assessor of the Reichskammergericht representing the ecclesiastical principality of Cologne and by 1527 had settled permanently in Speyer, where he died. His expectation that Erasmus would dedicate the Lactantius edition (Ep 2103) to him seems to imply an intimacy between them of which there is otherwise no evidence.

32 Christoph von Carlowitz (Ep 2085) had just arrived in Speyer bearing Epp 2121–3.

the widow's preacher,[33] but did not give it to me, although he promised to do so. But he left for Frankfurt.

I gave the dean of the greater church at Aachen[34] *The Christian Widow* and the volume of Lactantius to be delivered to Tielmannus Gravius.[35] I also sent the same book to Master Priccardus, canon of Aachen.[36] The dean of the greater church at Aachen is very fond of you. 'Everything he owns is yours,' he said; in fact he told me to pass that message on to you.

Not to exceed the limits of a letter, I must bring this to a close. My best wishes to your Excellency, and may Christ our Lord keep you safe and sound for a long time to come to the benefit of us all. If it is convenient, please, sir, give my greetings in the warmest possible terms to the most generous and erudite Master Bonifacius Amerbach and all his family, and also to your guest Master Haio and to Master Quirinus and Master Nicolaas[37] and all the rest of my colleagues. Farewell again, my learned teacher, and continue to cherish your humble servant, as you have done so far. In haste, as you can see from the rushed and graceless handwriting.

Speyer, 23 March 1529

I am leaving for Hungary. May Christ our Lord grant me a prosperous and successful journey.

Sincerely, your most devoted Faustus Celebris[38]

When I was taking leave of the right reverend bishop of Trent and he was giving me a letter for Queen Mary, Ferdinand's sister, he handed me two gold florins as money for the journey. I want you to know, good sir, what I received. The appointment that King Ferdinand gave me on your account is worth 130 gold florins per year,[39] and I also get two coats. But I

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33 Johann Henckel (Ep 2110); the letter to him is not extant.

34 Johann Schoenraid (d 1541), canon of St Mary's at Aachen since 1504 and dean of the chapter perhaps as early as 1520 (Epp 867:117n). He was one of the canons who played host to Erasmus in his visit to Aachen in September 1518. He is not to be confused, as in Allen's note, with a younger Johann Schoenraid who was a canon of St Mary's from 1522 to 1540, when he resigned to get married.

35 Ep 2103

36 Leonardus Priccardus (Ep 972)

37 Haio Camminga (Ep 2108:13–14), Quirinus Talesius (Ep 2113), and Nicolaas Kan (Ep 1832)

38 A jocular adaptation of Felix Polyphemus. Faustus is a variant of Felix. Celebris is a Latin version of the Greek Polyphemus 'much spoken of.'

39 Gold coins that may possibly have been actual Florentine florins (worth 4s 8d or 56d sterling, or 80d *groot* Flemish), or imitation florins of the same value, or Rhenish gold florins (worth much less: about 3s 4d or 40d sterling); see CWE

am required to keep a horse and provide arms, and I must always ride with the king. As always, my most learned teacher, I commend myself to your Excellency. As long as I live, you will find me your faithful and obedient servant. Again, may you live as long as Nestor,[40] and continue to do what you have done so far for your Faustus.

Yours sincerely, Faustus Celebris

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, consummate theologian and unquestionably the prince of humane letters, his patron who deserves all the respect due to a father. In Basel

2131 / From Hieronymus Ricius Linz, 23 March 1529

The autograph of this letter, first published as Ep 101 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). Erasmus' reply is Ep 2150.

Hieronymus Ricius (d 1570) was the son of Paulus Ricius, a Christian scholar and physician of Jewish birth whom Erasmus had met in Pavia (Ep 548:16n) and with whom he maintained cordial relations. Like his father, Hieronymus studied both arts and medicine and entered the service of King Ferdinand, becoming personal physician to his wife, Queen Anne, and provost of Trent. On 24 February 1527, he delivered an oration at Prague on the occasion of Ferdinand's coronation as king of Bohemia. In 1530, his father was raised to noble rank as baron of Sprinzenstein (an estate in Upper Austria not far from Linz), and in 1555 Hieronymus was authorized to drop the old family name of Ricius and use instead 'von und zu Sprinzenstein.'

Dear Erasmus, most blessed of men, I should not like you to think me impertinent for daring to address you in this dull and clumsy letter, when I am a poor unlearned creature and you are like a god, celebrated throughout the world, and not just universally respected, but admired even by heaven itself. You see, I am relying on your wonderful generosity and exceptional kindness, which 'wing their way abroad on the lips of all'[1] and are acknowl-

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12 650 Table 3D. On Rex's appointment to the king's company of archers see line 58 above.

40 Nestor, the counsellor in the *Iliad*, was proverbial for great age; cf *Adagia* I vi 66.

2131

1 Ennius *Epigrams* 1.2 = Cicero *Tusculan Disputations* 1.34

edged everywhere with paeans of praise. But I was given this letter for you and I thought it would be discourteous to forward it without enclosing something in my own hand.[2] So I shall count this my lucky day and mark it with a pearl,[3] since on this day I had a heaven-sent excuse for writing to you, something I had long hoped and prayed for. Nothing could have happened to me that was more welcome or more opportune. If you judge me worthy of even a single letter in reply, I shall think myself in heaven. Farewell.

Linz, 23 March 1529

DMD[4]

To your illustrious Excellency, from Hieronymus Ricius, provost of Trent and royal physician, your most obedient son

To that most accomplished interpreter of sacred and humane letters, the divine and greatly respected Erasmus of Rotterdam

2132 / To the Reader [Basel, c March 1529]

This is the preface to a collection of *Sententiae* commonly attributed to Seneca but only partly taken from his works. Erasmus found the manuscript at King's College, Cambridge. In the 1515 edition of Seneca, the collection appeared simply as *Senecae proverbia* without preface or comment. In the edition of 1529 (Ep 2091) Erasmus added this preface but included little in the way of commentary.

TO THE READER

Someone with an interest in the subject began a collection of striking apophthegms, taken from the Mimes of Publius[1] and Laberius.[2] These two writers of mimes had once enjoyed considerable renown for their work in this

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2 Nothing is known about the letter that was forwarded.
3 Ie as particularly happy and fortunate; see *Adagia* I v 54.
4 What these letters stand for is a matter of conjecture. Of the two possibilities noted by Allen the more plausible is *Deus magnus Dominus* (God, the mighty Lord), an allusion to Ps 95:3.

2132
1 'Publius' was a common error for Publilius (Syrus), a writer of mimes in the first century BC (cf Ep 2091 n56). Apophthegms from his work were collected in the following century and used as a school text. Mimes were popular stage sketches, frequently indecent, written in verse.
2 Also a writer of mimes, contemporary of Publilius

genre, though Publius was the better of the two.[3] It is not clear whether the collector stopped with the letter 'N' or someone interpolated additional material into the work, for from this point practically no entry is in verse. Moreover, scattered throughout the rest of the collection are other prose apophthegms, mostly from Seneca. The rhythms are either iambic senarii or trochaic tetrameter catalectic, but a very few are iambic tetrameters. Some of these are cited by Aulus Gellius and Macrobius under the names of Publius and Laberius; some are found also in Seneca; all are badly corrupted. I have corrected the majority of these.

I discovered this little work in Cambridge.[4] It had been carefully copied on parchment, with gold and coloured initials, but was seriously corrupt. Notes of unimaginable absurdity had been added, which as the saying goes, made contact neither with heaven nor with earth.[5] To each of these little commentaries was added a hexameter couplet, conveying the same meaning, but naturally in different words, designed, I suppose, to parade the author's command of language. Such nonsense was presented in lectures even to adults in those days, and the minds of children were tormented by rubbish of this sort. And today there are people who resent it that the study of languages and good literature has been brought back to elementary schools!

2133 / To Juan de Vergara

Basel, 24 March 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2004.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JUAN DE VERGARA, GREETING

Your letters, written on 29 June,[1] reached me finally just before 1 March. They came in two copies; all were delivered by Melchior,[2] and on the same day. They were very welcome in themselves, but even more so because a kind of despair was beginning to take hold of my mind. It was not that I

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3 Macrobius (*Saturnalia* 2.7) records that Caesar arranged a contest between the two men, which Publilius won.

4 Cf Epp 1656:5–6, 1797:4–8.

5 *Adagia* I v 44

2133

1 Erasmus had received two letters from Spain dated 29 June 1528: Ep 2004, which is answered by this letter, and Ep 2003 from Alfonso Fonseca, which is answered by Ep 2134.

2 Probably the Lyon printer Melchior Trechsel; see Ep 2083 n1.

had any doubts about your affection for me – and if any such thoughts had occurred to me, they would have been dispelled by a letter from my dear Valdés,[3] which bore ample testimony not just to your good will, but to your loyal devotion. Rather, I suspected you had reached the same conclusion about replying to my letters.

As for what you tell me about the decision that the judges have reached with regard to the publication of my *Apology*,[4] it is exactly what I thought would happen; so their decision does not greatly upset me. I have no recollection of writing anything in that book to detract from the dignity of the judges. For when it comes to the shameless behaviour of certain monks among us, who see themselves as Atlases, supporting the weight of a tottering church, it is hardly possible to say all that needs to be said about them; nor does it appear that the monks in your country are much wiser. It is against these that I vent my anger in the book. But perish the thought that I should utter a single word to damage the authority of the judges! In Britain, I am told, Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London, has been put in charge of the whole business,[5] and there is no one on whom I can depend more confidently than he. Similarly, in France the investigation of such issues is entrusted to a group of eminent persons.[6] Otherwise, the unscrupulous behaviour of men like Béda and Cousturier and those pseudomonks would have stirred up trouble everywhere. The book was badly printed. If you think it a good idea, I shall have a finer and more elegant edition run off in a respectable format,[7] and I shall correct those points which, my friends tell me, are likely to upset the judges.

I think your archbishop[8] is too great a man to be affected by hostility, not just because of the special dignity of his high office, but much more because of the remarkable probity of his character, the extent of his erudition, which complements his position, and his exceptional good sense. These qualities win him influence and favour with the emperor and with good and honourable men – all the more so since his virtues are commended by the distinguished line of his ancestry. No dog dare bark at such a man. As for yourself, I should hate to think that you would suffer any ill will on my ac-

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3 Answered by Ep 2126
4 The *Apologia adversus monachos* (Epp 1967, 2094)
5 On Tunstall as 'grand inquisitor,' see Ep 2033 n10.
6 Erasmus is referring to the panel of royally appointed 'judges delegate' that would eventually condemn Louis de Berquin to death; see Ep 2027 n5.
7 See Epp 2094–5.
8 Alonso de Fonseca (Ep 2134)

count, if indeed any such result were likely. I know that you have enough strength of mind not to be put out by yapping from any quarter. Then your good sense and intelligence give me reason to hope that even if some wild creature should be bold enough to hiss at you, none would dare to bite, especially when you have a heroic Ajax under whose shield you can hide.[9] Finally, I prophesy that your qualities will soon raise you to some high office, from which you can safely look down on reptiles like these without fear of the consequences. I myself have thus far refused all advancement, intoxicated as I am with the seductive pleasures of a quiet life. Now, too late, I repent of this decision. It is not that I am discontented with my humble existence, but in these times there is scarcely anyone so mean and common that he would hesitate (if you will pardon the expression) to spit and piss and shit on Erasmus. The distinction of even a modest position would have saved me from such indignities. Now my health is such that, far from being able to carry the burdens of office, I can scarcely keep body and soul together.

A wicked conspiracy among the workmen prevented the appearance at the spring fair of my Augustine,[10] which is now complete in ten large volumes.[11] The whole work is printed in large type, which, as you know, was not the case with my Jerome.[12] The unfortunate delay, however, turned out for the best, for I would not have dared to dedicate my work to the archbishop of Toledo without assuring myself that this would not be unwelcome. I know some people who are offended by a courteous gesture of this sort. Even now I do not have a firm answer, by letter, from the man himself or from you or Valdés,[13] though there are many indications that encourage me to go ahead with my original plan.[14] His gift is not unwelcome.[15] I shall divide it with several knowledgeable assistants who gave me considerable help in collating the manuscripts,[16] in fact, I have already done so with a

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9 Homer's Ajax is distinguished by his long, 'tower-like' shield; see eg *Iliad* 7.219–23. At *Iliad* 8.266–72 the hero Teucer finds shelter under the shield of Ajax.

10 The workmen apparently went on strike; cf Ep 2134:50–1.

11 Ep 2157

12 Epp 396, 1465

13 Ep 2109, with its assurance from Valdés (lines 25–7) that archbishop Fonseca would be pleased to have Erasmus dedicate something to him, had obviously not yet arrived.

14 Cf Ep 2126:191–6.

15 Two hundred ducats. See Epp 2004:38–42, 2109:27–8.

16 See Ep 2126 n58.

good part of the sum. This is how I interpret his statement that 'the money is given to Augustine, not to Erasmus.'[17]

The turmoil over heresy, if I interpret the opening moves correctly, has shifted from pamphleteering to arms. King Ferdinand is consulting with the German princes.[18] Here in the midst of the chills of winter there has been a fiery battle over the images.[19] Not a trace of them is left in the churches; the mass and the rites of the church have been totally abolished, except that from time to time there is a sermon. Then women join the children in singing a psalm, composed in German metre, and sometimes the bread is distributed as a symbol of our Lord's body. Monks and nuns are required to abandon the sacred habit or move elsewhere. So far, however, there have been no incursions into private homes, and no bloodshed – I can only hope that this will continue! So many cities in Germany and Switzerland have joined this movement that if they resort to the sword,[20] I should prefer to be a long way off. I know that the power of princes is great, but where will you find a soldier prepared to fight for the rights of the clergy? In my opinion the situation has gone beyond human control: we must turn to heaven for help.

Meanwhile I have offered myself as an active soldier in the service of the church. If I can claim no more, at least I have never deserted my post,[21] and I am sincere when I profess that I would not depart a finger's breadth[22] from the fellowship of the church.[23] I have fought three battles against Luther,[24] and in that part of Germany most in the grip of this new fervour. That is something which no one before me had the courage to do, so you may think of me as Thraso in the comedy.[25] The Parisians, living beyond the range of fire, launch their brave articles, which are simply laughed at here.[26] Moreover, the defence that some people offer in writing and debate is enough to make one wish they had remained absolutely silent – that at least is my opinion. In Brabant I was able to write in peace. But if I had stayed

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17 See Ep 2109:28–32.
18 At the imperial diet in Speyer
19 Ep 2097 n1
20 See Ep 2173 n10.
21 *Adagia* II vii 25
22 *Adagia* I v 6
23 See Ep 2082 n78.
24 In the *De libero arbitrio* (Ep 1419) and in the two parts of *Hyperaspistes* (Epp 1667, 1853)
25 Thraso, the belligerent soldier in Terence's *Eunuchus*
26 Cf Ep 2134:146–8.

there, I would have had to fight a fierce battle with men who are now in charge of the Inquisition.[27] Faced with their hostility, I could not have felt secure without the protection of the court, and I could not count on the court unless I bowed the knee. But my health does not permit me to be at anyone's call. Now, however, I must move somewhere, but where, I do not see clearly, for nowhere does the hope of peace shine forth. So, as the Greek proverb says, 'This wind will let me neither stay nor sail.'[28] An unfamiliar bed, a different wine, or a change of attire puts me in danger right away. What do you imagine will happen if I leave this nest, which has been my home for so many years, and leave my friends, whose character I have known and tested over a long friendship, and take myself, so to speak, to another world? Nevertheless, the attempt must be made, whatever the consequences, for to stay on would be interpreted simply as a vote in favour of all that is happening here; and I have no doubt that rumour would greatly embellish the truth.

I replied to your two brothers. I was delighted to receive the good wishes of the maiden Isabel, which I reciprocate with interest.[29] It is splendid that the female sex is returning to the models of the past. Now we have as Queen of England a very learned lady,[30] whose daughter Mary writes letters in fine Latin.[31] Thomas More's household is a veritable home of the Muses.[32] The emperor's sister, Mary, takes great pleasure in Latin books. I have recently written for her *The Christian Widow*.[33] A preacher who is very close to her insisted that I do this.[34] The scene turns full circle in human affairs: now monks are illiterate, and women devote themselves to books.

Basel, 24 March 1529

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27 The head of the Inquisition in Brabant was Nicholas Coppin (Ep 1719 n8), a theologian who had once been friendly to Erasmus but had turned against him in 1525.

28 *Adagia* II v 21

29 Cf Ep 2004:57–63. Those who knew Isabel de Vergara (documented 1528–33), the sister of Juan and Francisco de Vergara and half-sister of Bernardino Tovar, considered her the intellectual equal of her brothers. An ardent Erasmian, she was denounced to the Inquisition as a Lutheran in 1533, but it is not known what happened to her as a result.

30 Catherine of Aragon (Epp 1313 n12, 1717, 1960)

31 Mary Tudor (Ep 1727 n4)

32 See Epp 1233:54–58, 1402:34–42.

33 Ep 2100

34 Johann Henckel (Ep 2110)

2134 / To Alonso de Fonseca

Basel, 25 March 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2003.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ALONSO DE FONSECA, ARCHBISHOP OF TOLEDO, GREETING

Paul, that great champion of the church and divinely chosen instrument of the philosophy of the gospel,[1] a man of more than human powers who was accustomed to converse with heaven,[2] confesses often to a deep sorrow in his heart and a sadness that makes him weary of life; sometimes his letters are stained with tears, he tries to find comfort in the conversation of the pious, and prays to be spared the buffeting of Satan's minister.[3] So is it surprising if I, who am no more a match for Paul's strong spirit than a worm crawling on the ground can match an eagle, react in an ordinary human way when I am harassed by so many ills that I am disinclined to burden the ears of so great a prelate by recounting them? Some trivial and humble problems, partly by their number and partly by their annoying persistence, weigh more heavily upon a man than great troubles: bedbugs, for example, and gnats, and fleas, which, by causing sleeplessness, make some people sick of life, even occasionally leading to death. I should be lying, my Lord, if I said that, amid the barking and brickbats and sniping of my enemies, I never felt sick at heart. Yet with Christ's help and his aid in calming the storms of my tribulations through the inspiration of his grace, these ills of the flesh have never yet reached the point where I contemplated deserting my post or succumbing to despair. On the contrary, I feel I have gained strength from the assaults of men.

So it has been the will of divine providence to use the wickedness of evil men to test the sincerity of his people, and conversely to use the kindness of good men to console those who labour under their afflictions lest they falter. We must suffer the former patiently like the lash applied for our

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2134

1 Cf Acts 9:15, where the Vulgate reads 'chosen vessel.'

2 2 Cor 12:2–5, where Paul's description of the 'man in Christ' who was 'caught up into the third heaven' is understood by Erasmus as Paul speaking about himself; see the opening lines of *De philosophia evangelica* (a 'new preface' written for third edition of the *Novum Testamentum*, published by Froben in July 1522) LB VI *4 verso. The same interpretation is found in Erasmus' annotation on 2 Cor 12:5; see CWE 43 274 n4.

3 2 Cor 1:8, 2:4 and 7, 12:7

correction by a father who is anxious for our salvation, and accept the latter graciously as the consolation sent by a merciful God to give strength to our weakness. Yet, in the present situation, personal insults are the least of my sufferings, for how small a loss it would be to the world if Erasmus, whatever merits he may have, were reduced to nothingness in men's eyes! What really tears at my heart is that there is so much malice and impiety among the majority of Christians, and especially among those whose responsibility it has been to temper the foolishness of ordinary people. For I see no hope that the world will experience peace in the church again unless we lay aside our human prejudices and join our hearts in doing the work of Christ. If this comes about, I shall soon cease to mourn my lot.

I am delighted to know that the storm in your country is now raging less fiercely. I am also well aware how much I owe to your piety and good sense. And yet my critics will never be silent and will stir up trouble again at the first opportunity. They have in Paris a great champion,[4] a kind of Saul (by which I mean a rabble-rouser),[5] not just an ignorant fellow, but someone lacking even in common sense, a born agitator made for troubles of this sort. I am very pleased that you did not disapprove entirely of my *Apology*.[6] I thought you would see how moderate I have been, if you considered what response the stupidity of these people deserves. Has anyone ever seen Articles like these submitted to such men?[7]

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4 The identity of this 'great champion' is an open question. Allen suggested the possibility of the Franciscan Juan de Zafra (Zafranus), about whom nothing is known except that he prepared the Paris reprint of Carvajal's *Apologia* and was belittled at the end of Erasmus' *Responsio adversus febricitantis cuiusdam libellum* for having done so (LB X 1684A). CEBR III 467 accepts the probability of this suggestion. One has to wonder, however, why Erasmus would attribute so much importance and influence to such a nobody. Carvajal himself appears to be ruled out because Erasmus did not associate him specifically with Paris (see Ep 2126:104–8). It thus seems more likely that Erasmus is referring here to his old Paris nemesis, Noël Béda (Ep 2082 n56), to whose latest attack, *Apologia adversus clandestinos Lutheranos*, he had just replied with *Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas*; see Ep 2110 n8.

5 It is not clear whether Erasmus means Saul of Tarsus, who persecuted Christians before becoming the apostle Paul, or King Saul, who, troubled by an evil spirit, persecuted David.

6 Ep 1967

7 Ie the articles compiled by the Spanish religious orders and submitted to the Inquisition as support for charges of heresy against Erasmus; see Ep 1791 introduction.

The complete Augustine has now been brought to a successful conclusion in an edition that does him honour.[8] It would have seen the light of day at the recent spring fair but for an obstinate conspiracy among the workers that delayed publication.[9] It will, however, be ready within two months. I shall see that you get a copy as soon as possible, since Augustine has always been a great favourite of yours – and rightly so, for he alone possesses all the qualities of a Christian writer: he is a conscientious teacher, tough in debate, fervent in his preaching, effective in consoling those in distress, always devout, breathing the true spirit of Christian gentleness.

The rest of your letter is filled with arguments exhorting me, or rather pressing me strongly, not to fail the church when it is imperilled by a multitude of sects and torn by divisions of opinion, especially in Germany, where the Christian religion should have flourished under the banner of his imperial Majesty. The more passionate your appeal, the more I admire the deeply religious character of your mind and the serious concern that I see you have (as indeed one would expect from so great a prelate) for the honour and peace of the church. And I recognize your great good will towards me, which has convinced you that I am preeminently equipped for this task; and you are so persuaded of this that you sweep aside the common complaints about the deficiencies in my powers. I wish we could see some effective remedy for the plight of the church as clearly as we see the perils that assail it – indeed we can no longer talk of the perils of the church, but of its widespread collapse. Yet in these unprecedented troubles I seem to recognize the hand of God; already it appears that things have gone beyond the reach of human powers. But I have not yet abandoned all hope, for I know that God's help most often arrives at the moment of deepest despair. Unless I am mistaken, we would soon see God's help if, with united hearts, we fled for refuge to the mercy of the Lord and set a course that is worthy of Christ. Now we all pull in different directions. I see scarcely anyone here who thinks about changing his life for the better; on the contrary many are getting worse – not to mention the unyielding anger of our princes, which is a dreadful curse on Christendom. As for my own role, I am often appealed to on these matters even by the great, to some of whom my response was more honest than satisfying. But such is the nature of this case that to put everything down in writing would be neither safe for me nor helpful to the cause itself. I could name many witnesses who would demonstrate to you

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8 Ep 2157
9 Cf Ep 2133:54–5.

the inadequacy of my powers, Zúñiga, Latomus, Béda, Cousturier[10] – and Luther himself.[11]

But I do not want to engage in a militant argument with so noble a person as yourself. Even if we suppose that I possess, or ever possessed, all the eloquence, learning, authority, and influence that this cause demanded, I have never been able to convince myself of the truth of this, and still cannot. So when this evil first began to spring up, with great approval everywhere, foreseeing that it would end in dreadful turmoil I kept out of this dangerous, though at that time highly popular, affair, and I dissuaded my closest friends from joining it.[12] Then when it raised its head a little higher, the monks, who took the leading roles in the drama, treated me in such a way as to make clear that they would rather push me into Luther's camp than stand in the line of battle against him. It would take too long to explain what was going on. So when I reflected that much of the church had slipped into pharisaism (though I thought this preferable to the present confusion), and being uncertain what divine providence wanted to accomplish by means of Luther's ardour – for he still seemed to be a good man who, angered by the vices of the world and inspired by religious zeal, acted with a passion that was certainly excessive, but still controllable – and when I compared my own weak self with the thousands of theologians whom many years of experience had made highly skilled practitioners in this kind of debate, among whom were some of the leading dignitaries of the church, I tell you plainly that I was held back by a kind of awe, not wanting, even inadvertently, to fight against the divine will and fearing to make the cause of religion worse if I undertook a task for which, on so many counts, I was ill equipped.

That was my opinion then, and I hold it even more strongly now, and I do not think I am mistaken. It is one thing to produce scholia on Jerome as a help to a reader with only modest learning, or to write notes on the meaning of the text of the New Testament to encourage the beginner to become familiar with the Scriptures; but it is quite another to defend, with the help of the sacred writings, those doctrines by whose acceptance or rejection the Christian religion stands or falls.

However, not to waste all my time on quarrels and battles with the monks, I moved to Basel, determined to do at least something to support

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10 Epp 1260 n36 (Zúñiga), 934 introduction (Latomus), 2082 n56 (Béda), 2082 n24 (Cousturier)

11 Particularly in the *De servo arbitrio* (1525)

12 Cf Ep 1167:439–46.

the public interest or the cause of religion and letters. The record speaks loud and clear that I did not spend all my time in slumber. Nor have I been an altogether silent spectator of this tragic scene. By my *Colloquies*, letters, and books I have called many back from the wrong path, or prevented them from entering upon it, or at least softened their beliefs. Then I did battle with Luther and faced his venomous darts, parrying some as best I could or throwing them back against the man himself.[13] And I had the courage to do this in a part of Germany that was more sympathetic to Luther than Wittenberg itself, where it would have been safer to attack him than it is here. How far I succeeded I do not know. Certainly the staunchest adherents of the sects in this city pursue me with a correspondingly deadly hatred – and I include men who were once my closest friends.

I could bear this more easily if at the same time the other side were not just as vehement in their attacks on me; in fact they became even more belligerent after I made one or two sallies against the Lutheran lines. It looks as though they are irked by my refusal to become a heretic just to please them! Such are the friends on whose behalf I am fighting. They would rather see the ship in peril with me thrown overboard than guided safe and sound into harbour with me at the helm. Moreover, there are many for whom it is not enough to reject heretical doctrines unless one also accepts holus-bolus[14] every idea that they themselves have thought up so far. Indeed, even this does not satisfy them, for the rope is tugged this way and that,[15] and they keep adding new dogmas to a total that had already gone beyond the limit. This whole clique is governed by certain rules of the Schoolmen, which they require us to adopt in precisely the same terms as they themselves are accustomed to use, even though there is much disagreement among the schools on these questions. I have observed that here in this region the works of Latomus, Hieronymus,[16] Cousturier, and Béda are simply laughed at and even act as an encouragement to those who are inclined to the new doctrines.

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13 In *De libero arbitrio* (Ep 1419) and in both parts of *Hyperaspistes* (Epp 1667, 1853). See also n11 above.

14 Literally 'approved by the white rule,' that is, by an undiscriminating judgment; see *Adagia* I v 88.

15 An expression, common in Tertullian, for arguing to and fro; see eg Tertullian *De pudicitia* 2, *Adversus Marcionem* 4.4, *De corona militis* 3.

16 Since a Parisian theologian is apparently intended, Allen suggested that the Hieronymus in question might be Jérôme de Hangest (d 1538), who wrote prolifically on logic and ethics but who also published eight anti-Lutheran treatises and preached frequent sermons against heretics.

Why, even the writings of John, bishop of Rochester, a man of extraordinary abilities, are completely ignored.[17] After this what could I have accomplished except to make the hornets angrier still? I did what I could at grave risk to myself, but without endangering the cause, testifying secretly and openly, publicly and privately, in speech, writing, and action, that I would never separate myself by even a hair's breadth from the unity of the church.[18] Finally, even if it proved necessary for me to draw my pen like a sword against them, the attempt would have to be made in another place, and I could not succeed without help from the theologians. Here I was alone, and if I had written anything of the kind, no printer would have dared to print it. Think of the uproar caused by my *De delectu ciborum* and *De confessione*.[19]

You will say, 'You should have returned to Louvain.' But I was kept a prisoner here, and still am, by that most cruel of tyrants, the stone,[20] making it hardly ever possible for me to step outside the house; and even if the stone had allowed me to undertake such a lengthy journey, the reason that convinced me to leave Brabant in the first place prevented my return.[21] You will adduce the favour of the court as a defence against the efforts of my foes. But someone of your good sense can see that there are some vulgar wretches in your part of the world whose audacity yields neither to his imperial Majesty nor to the authority of the bishops. I have learned from my experience with others how unsafe it is to trust such people. Nor is there any place where they are more powerful than here with us. Good letters have won me a great deal of popularity and some influence in Germany. But suddenly all that popularity has turned into hostility, and where I had influence I am now treated with contempt. I, who was earlier 'the star of Germany'[22] and 'the defender of the true faith,' have now been given,

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17 In the 1520s, Erasmus' friend and patron John Fisher (Ep 229) had written a number of polemical works defending orthodox Catholic doctrine against Luther and other Protestant reformers. It was on these works that his academic reputation was based. See Richard Rex *The Theology of John Fisher* (Cambridge 1991) chapters 5–9.

18 See Ep 2082 n78.

19 The two works, more commonly known as the *Epistola de esu carnium* (Ep 1341A:1306–13) and the *Exomologesis* (Ep 1426), had been linked together in attacks by Erasmus' conservative critics; see Epp 1571 n14, 1581 n100, Epp 1582:95–110, 1608.

20 For Erasmus' most recent attack, see Ep 2084:16–17.

21 Ie the hostility of the Louvain theologians; cf Ep 2133:93–5.

22 Cf Ep 1352:41.

as the saying is, the 'thumbs down'[23] and am called 'Balaam'[24] and 'Doctor Ass.'[25]

However, lest I refuse to admit to any of the qualities which your Lordship has attributed to me, let me say that I think myself fairly free of ambition and self-seeking and all those other vices that have not only provided the seedbed for so much evil in the world but seem also to stand in the way of a remedy; and unless I do not know myself at all, I would not hesitate to submit my poor body to the flames if I were convinced that this would be for the good of the church, and I should consider this no grievous loss. For, in the first place, what does this life hold for me that would be so desirable according to the aspirations of the flesh? Secondly, even supposing that some happy experience lay ahead, how brief is the time left to me, even if I was not carried off by some sudden catastrophe?

But things have now reached the point where everything seems to presage war.[26] If that happens, your statement that Germany is the most wretched and unfortunate of regions will really come true; and though it grieves me to say so, I am afraid that (unless I am totally mistaken) this tragedy is not far off. Both sides are strong enough to leave the issue of supremacy in doubt, and even if the better side wins, the victory will not be gained without an immense cost in human blood. When the issue is decided by the sword, there is no place for me – unless I should be called upon to suffer martyrdom, a fate I would not try to escape if the case demanded it.[27] You may consider this an idle boast, but listen to this – you may laugh if you like, but it is only too true. I believe that when Stephen was crushed beneath a volley of stones,[28] or when Sebastian was stabbed with arrows,[29] they suffered less than I do, since for many years I have been stabbed by

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23 *Adagia* I viii 46. The equivalent Latin expression of disapproval is actually 'thumbs up,' 'thumbs down' being the expression of approval.

24 Ep 1510:19–26

25 See the colloquy *Concio, sive Merdardus* 'The Sermon' CWE 40 942:24–5, with n22 (page 956).

26 Erasmus is probably referring to the drift towards armed conflict in the Swiss Confederation, in which both sides would have non-Swiss German allies. War in fact broke out in June 1529; see Ep 2173 n10. At the same time, the religious parties in Germany were already in the process of forming armed alliances against one another, a development much fostered by the outcome of the Diet of Speyer, which was currently in session; see Ep 2107 n1. How well informed Erasmus was about these developments is not clear.

27 Cf Ep 1167:488–9.

28 St Stephen the Martyr; Acts7:55–60

29 St Sebastian the Martyr, who according to tradition was executed by being shot full of arrows at the order of Emperor Diocletian

the tongues of men with the poison of serpents on their lips and have been pelted with insults from every quarter. It would not have taken long for such a volley of abuse to have parted me from the fellowship of true believers, if anything could have torn me from the commitment I made once and for all to the bride of Christ, the church.[30]

As for conditions here,[31] I am sure that rumour will bring you the news much faster than this letter will reach you. I must change my place of residence, a move, I am aware, that cannot be made without grave risk to my life. I have grown accustomed to this nest for so many years. But let Christ decide what the outcome will be. I shall do what a good Christian should, giving more weight to religion than to personal safety, for to remain here, where it is not permitted to offer the sacrifice of the mass or to partake of the body of Christ, would be tantamount to professing what these people profess. Oecolampadius is taking over all the churches. Monks and nuns are ordered to move elsewhere or abandon the habit. The same thing is happening in many other cities. In the churches nothing remains of the traditional service except that in some a preacher of their persuasion first delivers a sermon; then children and women sing a hymn in German metre. This is just the beginning. I am terribly afraid that this pharisaism will lead to paganism. Luther controls several cities that hold views on the Eucharist similar to those of the church. But the other side is in possession of a larger number, and they seem to be moving rapidly to a total abolition of the priesthood and of monasticism. The Anabaptists are numerous everywhere, but they have not obtained their own church anywhere. In comparison with the others they are commended by the innocence of their lives, but they are persecuted by the rest of the sects as well as by the orthodox. I suspect that many Jews and pagans are involved in these upheavals; the former hate Christ and the latter believe in nothing at all. I imagine they are plotting a new kind of popular rule.[32] This movement is driven forward by the clever scheming of a few people, though so far no one has a clear idea of their identity. The evolution of events leads one to say that the will of God is being worked out, for his eternal providence will sometimes use the wickedness of evil men to correct his people. Whenever that happens, the best remedy is to acknowledge the presence of the hand of God pointing us to repentance and, by changing our lives for the better, to turn his wrath into mercy. So let those people be our locusts and frogs and lice and boils so

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30 Cf n18 above.

31 See Ep 2097 n1.

32 Erasmus' word here is *democratia*, which literally means 'rule by the people,' but the 'new' *democratia* amounted to 'mob rule.'

long as we do not act like Pharaoh or the Egyptians.[33] It is not my practice to pass judgment on men I do not know. But I have seen no one here, either among priests or monks, who has been changed one whit by this great convulsion and made into a better person. All we want is revenge, as though what is taking place were solely the work of men.

Moreover, the fact that you separate matters of doctrine from corrupt behaviour is proof to me of a truly Christian understanding.[34] For if that separation is not made, there will be no stability of opinion, since human affairs have never reached, and never will reach, such a happy state that there will not be ample justification for criticizing the morals of many people. To change the state of things is easy, to change it for the better is very difficult. Everyone must admire an exceptional and truly pious tolerance like yours, which is made manifest in your willingness to see the behaviour, even of men of your own rank, criticized and corrected, provided that those who abandoned the fellowship of the church under the influence of false teaching repent and come to their senses. There is no great cause for complaint about the bishops, but as for the Roman pontiff and those who hold sway in his name, the reasons for criticism are much greater, and for the monks, and especially the mendicants, greatest of all. As for the kings, their heart is in the hand of God,[35] who will turn their thoughts to the counsels of peace when we have earned his mercy. Meanwhile, we humble folk shall do the only thing we can – plead for the mercy of the Lord with ceaseless prayers and petitions, that he may bring a happier issue out of the present turmoil and confusion. I shall not flag in my efforts to carry out whatever the Lord may wish to do through me, the lowliest of his creatures. In this statement of the case I have had to be silent about some of the issues that are perhaps of central importance; I thought it nonetheless my duty to present to such a friendly bishop as yourself at least a partial defence of my position. Later I shall make it clear to all that I did not lack sincerity of purpose or willingness to help.

The gift you so kindly offered for the rebirth of Augustine I shall share with those who were helpful in assisting my efforts by collating manuscripts,[36] the most boring task imaginable.

May the Lord preserve you for us and keep you safe.

Basel, 25 March AD 1529

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33 Exodus 8–9
34 See Ep 2003:77–87.
35 Prov 21:1
36 Cf Ep 2126:239–42.

2135 / From Bernardus Niger

Dôle, 27 March 1529

This manuscript of this letter, first published as Ep 103 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

Bernardus Niger (documented 1529–c 1537) was a student at Dôle when he wrote this letter to Erasmus. He was a friend of Viglius Zuichemus (Ep 2101), whom he joined in 1530 at Bourges, whither Andrea Alciati (Ep 1250) had been invited to teach law by Francis I. If Erasmus wrote a reply, it has not survived.

Cordial greetings. Who could not, with good reason, call me the most tactless and impudent of men for daring to intrude upon you, our high priest of letters, with my inane inanities or to interrupt your work in any way. But your warm humanity, which everyone insists you possess in no ordinary degree, has given me the courage to address you without fear or blushing, not only from a distance by letter but even face to face. So I beg you to look kindly upon anything I shall write to you.

I think that the flattering mention you made of me in your letter to Karel Sucket puts me under such a heavy debt as is difficult to repay,[1] for you have made me so beholden to you and, as the saying goes, so deeply in your debt that my dearest wish is to be given by heaven the chance to show my good will and prove my gratitude. Were my wish granted, you would find me ready and willing to do anything to oblige you. But why go on at length? I shall do my best to demonstrate my passionate regard for you in deeds rather than words. In the meantime I promise to be the advocate and defender of your name and to maintain that good will towards you for ever.

Your book of *Adages* has lately been printed in Lyon, as you will learn from a letter that Sebastianus Gryphius prefixed to the work.[2] I am sending you a copy in the hope it may perhaps be worth your attention.

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2135

1 For Karel Sucket, also a student at Dôle at this time, see Ep 2191. The letter to him mentioned here is not extant, but Ep 2141:6–7 shows that Erasmus had recently written to him at Dôle and by 1 April had received a reply.

2 For the Gryphius edition of 1528, see Ep 2022 n7. When the Froben edition of September 1528 was published (Ep 2002), Gryphius undertook a new edition (Lyon 1529), in which he appended to the pages of his 1528 edition the 123 new adages of the 1528 Froben edition as well as a collection of the passages that had been inserted here and there into the older adages. To the titlepage he added a letter to the reader explaining how the new printing had been expanded. This 1529 Gryphius edition is listed on page 3 of Ferdinand

I did not want to bother you with a long screed, knowing the many other tasks with which you are occupied. I pray you may have the strength you need for them. Please think of me as your most devoted servant.

Dôle, 27 March AD 1529

Your most loyal friend, Bernardus Niger

To Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, eminent theologian and prince of eloquence

2136 / To Ludwig Baer

Basel, 30 March 1529

Until World War II the autograph of this letter, which was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, was in the Radowitz collection of the former Prussian State Library in Berlin. It is now preserved in the collection of Erasmus autographs at the Bibliotheka Jagiellońska in Cracow. There are differences of no great moment between the manuscript and the printed version. Allen followed the manuscript, noting the variant readings in the apparatus.

On Ludwig Baer, who had already left Basel and would settle in Freiburg in the autumn, see Ep 2087.

Cordial greetings, truest of my friends in Christ. I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart on being able to celebrate the Lord's resurrection,[1] as is proper, in the joy of the spirit. We keep our Easter without the Alleluia, without the victory feast, but not without bitter herbs.[2] We seem now to be sitting by the rivers of Babylon, where we have no heart to sing the Lord's song in a strange land.[3] But I am here only in body: in spirit I am with you.

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van der Haeghen's *Bibliotheca Erasmiana. Répertoire des œvres d'Érasme* 1re série: *Liste sommaire et provisoire des diverses éditions de ses œuvres* (Ghent 1893; repr Nieuwkoop 1961), but there is no entry for it in the *Bibliotheca Belgica*. Allen found a copy of the volume in the Bibliothèque publique at Besançon and included Gryphius' letter to the reader in his note.

2136

1 In 1529 Easter fell on 28 March.

2 The reference is to Exod 12:8 on the preparation of the Passover, which in the King James Version reads: 'And they shall eat the flesh that night roasted at the fire, and unleavened bread with bitter herbs.' Erasmus follows the Vulgate, which for 'bitter herbs' has 'wild lettuce.' Pliny *Naturalis historia* 20.58 describes various types of wild lettuce, a bitter plant used principally for medicinal purposes.

3 Ps 137 (136 Vulgate):1–4

I hoped to be in Freiburg before the triumphal day of the Lord, so that when people asked about me here, they would receive the reply which the angels made to the holy women, 'He is risen, he is not here.'[4] But just before the middle of March, without any evident cause, I was seized by a heavy cold which clung to me most stubbornly and was accompanied by a fever.[5] It was so bad that for several nights I was in serious danger of choking on the thick phlegm. I have hardly yet recovered from this attack. Now, since I am daily expecting the return of Hieronymus Froben from Frankfurt,[6] it seemed more sensible to stay here a little longer. With his help it will be safer for me to make the move; also it is possible that he is bringing me a letter from the imperial court at Brabant or from the diet at Speyer.[7] It is better, I am sure, to move once rather than twice. Some time ago, however, I sent on the most important of my possessions and those that would be most attractive to thieves and brigands.[8] I shall follow with the rest of my belongings at the first opportunity. In the meantime my bedroom serves as my chapel until, like the Hebrews who recovered their freedom in the desert,[9] I shall be free to sacrifice to the Lord. I fervently hope that this will be soon.

After these tempestuous storms, when the Lord's anger has turned to pity, he in his mercy will bring us happier times. For no one, from the dawn of the church to the present time, has witnessed, or read, or heard about such tumults as we see, or rather suffer, today. I recognize in this the work of divine providence. He is testing his chosen ones, like gold in the refiner's fire,[10] and trying them to see if they truly trust and love Him. I do not know what effect this has on others, but for myself I can assert that the buffeting of misfortune, far from making me stumble, has made me considerably stronger. Far be it from me to attribute any of this to my own strength or merits; rather, I see here the hand of the Almighty, lending his strength to my weakness. And since I dedicated myself once and for all to his will, I am sure his mercy will not fail me to the end. He, like that

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4 Mark 16:6
5 See Ep 2125 n3.
6 See Ep 2140:7–8.
7 For Erasmus' hopes and expectations from Brabant and Speyer, see Epp 2115:5–8, 2107:11–14.
8 Cf Ep 2143 n3.
9 Much of the imagery in the early part of this letter derives from the liturgy of the Easter Vigil. In the Exultet and in one of the nine traditional lessons the story of the return of the Israelites from Egypt is recalled and related to the Easter message.
10 See Ep 2114 n7.

good Samaritan, pours out wine to take away the corruption of my flesh; he pours out oil also,[11] thus providing, along with the trials, a way of escape so that I may have strength to bear them.[12]

If this were not so, how could this little body, this feeble spirit, have borne up under the assaults of so many ills? To say nothing of the burdens of old age, which are weighty enough in themselves, or the much weightier burdens of ill health, what could be harder for the human heart to bear than to be attacked on every side by men with the instincts of a gladiator, and that without cease or respite?[13] It is said that Hercules never faced two monsters at once. But this poor creature has nothing but constant battles with monsters like Antaeus and Cerberus, the lions, the crab, and the hydra,[14] not to mention those tiny, but often nastier little beasties: vipers, beetles, bugs, gnats, and fleas.[15] Many men, on suffering loss, find escape in the noose, but honest and noble spirits count an honourable name more precious than wealth. You know how the humanities won me many friends, both in Germany and elsewhere, who all but worshipped me. It is only in possessing such friends that I counted myself fortunate, for I never courted wealth or preferment. Who would be ready to give up such a blessing lightly? But not only must I give it up: I must accept the fact that, in many cases, my most devoted friends, those (to use an old-fashioned term) who would be 'true till death,'[16] are now either deadly enemies or secret traitors. A blow that falls on an innocent man is heavy to bear, heavier still if it falls on a benefactor, and heaviest of all when the blow comes from a friend – although sometimes the most painful injuries I suffer come from those who are on my side, loyal supporters to be sure, but ill-advised.

Will there be any end to the pamphlets that fly forth from every quarter, tearing me apart? What a savage frenzy possesses these men, whose teeth are spears and arrows, beneath whose lips lies the poison of asps,

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11 Luke 10:33–4

12 Cf 1 Cor 10:13.

13 The instinct of a gladiator was to attack mercilessly with the intention of killing or getting killed; see *Adagia* I iii 76. On Erasmus' general fondness for gladiatorial imagery in describing battles with his critics, see Epp 1934 n1, 1943 n4.

14 All of these creatures are related in some way to the Labours of Hercules: Cerberus, the Nemean lion, the Hydra of Lerna, the Libyan giant Antaeus; the Crab, an animal hostile to Hercules, is connected with the tale of the Hydra.

15 This collection of 'little beasties' may have been suggested by Plautus *Curculio* 500, where the speaker compares pimps to 'flies, midges, bugs, lice, and fleas.'

16 Erasmus uses the Greek word *συναποθνήσκειν*, literally 'to die together.'

whose tongue is a sword![17] Is there any place where they curb their villainy? Not at banquets, not in private conversations, not in the privacy of confession, not in holy sermons, not in public lectures, not in the courts of princes, not in a carriage or a boat. Nothing can check their impudence, neither shame, nor conscience, nor the authority of princes, nor the fact that their folly is so often thrown back in their face. They impose on simple folk, they drive those who do not wish me well into mad actions, and pressure more moderate men by their shameless bullying. They turn up everywhere, they speak every language – I only wish they spoke of the wonderful works of God![18] And so, inevitably, they win the case by default (to use the old phrase),[19] for I speak only Latin,[20] and even if I knew a thousand tongues, what could I do, by myself, against their serried ranks, especially when I must engage not just with a host of foes, but also with those on whose side I stand. There is no sect that does not harbour a deadly hatred of me, but I am detested most of all by those who want to take from us the Lord's body. In spite of this, I am accused by some bishops and princes of colluding with these people. Others complain that I do not wield my pen against doctrinal innovators; some think my pen is not sharp enough. Nor is there any shortage of people to argue that I prepared the seedbed for these evils; and this is to say nothing for the moment about those midget foes of mine who, like geese, bugs, gnats, and fleas, are always honking, stinking, yelling, and biting. They may not be poisonous, but their dishonesty often makes a man tired of life, sometimes even driving him to his death through sleepless nights.

To suffer such things for so many years, and to suffer alone – for my friends (if any remain) are frightened off by my unpopularity – is this not a worse fate than to end one's days by a single act, like Stephen, who was stoned to death,[21] or Sebastian, who was pierced by arrows[22] – though I am not safe from threats of this sort too from those who plot my physical destruction.

As if this were not enough, some evil genius has stirred up a new controversy among the votaries of the humanities, no less bitter than that between the sects who fight like gladiators over the faith. Because I compared

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17 Pss 57:4 (56:5 Vulgate), 140:3 (139:4 Vulgate); and cf Rom 3:13. Cf also Ep 2162:45–6.
18 Acts 2:11
19 *Adagia* I v 80
20 Cf Ep 1313 n16.
21 Ep 2134 n28
22 Ep 2134 n29

Budé with Bade[23] I am pelted in Paris with a volley of epigrams from the littérateurs.[24] This plague started at Rome with some of the Ciceronians and has now moved to France.[25] I am being tossed from the bridge as a sexagenarian and forced to abandon, once and for all, whatever claims I may have had in the past to talent, eloquence, or judgment.[26] Yet many take the view that it is preferable to lose one's life than one's fame. Fame (if I have any) I could sacrifice with an easy mind. But, instead of being honoured, to be spat on by even the vilest of men, to become a target for their blows, and (if you'll forgive the expression) to be pissed and shat on, does that not seem a fate worse than death? Nor amid the swelling waters of my misfortunes do I see a harbour looming up where I could find a tranquil shelter in my old age, for now, far from being welcome in the courts of princes, I am judged unfit for the society of men unless I am prepared to give my allegiance to one or other of the sects. This I would not hesitate to do if I could persuade myself that what they teach is the sacred truth.[27] But since I could not agree to this in the past, and cannot do so now, I think it better to fight even a thousand sects and monsters than leave the fellowship of the Catholic church.[28]

How these stormy events will finally turn out is something we must leave in the hands of God. I am persuaded that a man who plants his foot on the immovable rock cannot perish.[29] It may well be that, by these upheavals and disasters, the Lord wishes to correct our ways; for if we must admit the truth, our morals have fallen far, far short of true and genuine holiness, and this is especially the case with those who seemed to be pillars of the church. I make this judgment not by the demanding standard of the gospel spirit, but even in comparison with the decrees, issued by the popes of earlier times, on the proper conduct of priests and clerks, countless examples of which are recorded in a little work by Jean Gerson.[30] The Lord once called

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23 See Epp 1948, 2021 introductions.
24 Ep 2119
25 Ep 1948 introduction
26 *Adagia* I v 37. The proverb 'to throw the sexagenarians off the bridge' means to treat older people as useless and to remove them from active life.
27 Cf Ep 2147:40–2.
28 See Ep 2082 n78.
29 See Ep 2112 n16.
30 Jean Gerson (1363–1429) was a prominent Paris theologian of the later Middle Ages and a leading advocate of ecclesiastical reform. The 'little work' referred to is the *Declaratio defectuum virorum ecclesiasticorum*, one of four works in a volume of *Tractatuli domini Johannis Gerson* (Augsburg: Froschauer c 1503).

the Egyptians to repentance by sending upon them frogs, locusts, lice, and other plagues.[31] But by God's help, no suffering or thirst for revenge will force me to seek the role of locust or of Pharaoh. Let the bridegroom correct the bride at his will, for he knows what is best for her. But there is nothing so alluring or so painful that it could separate me from the fellowship of the one true dove.[32] The wickedness of man can take away our property, our reputation, and our life, but it cannot take away our greatest possession, that is, our faith, unless we ourselves betray this treasure, given to us through the generosity of the bridegroom. So I think the safest course is to entrust ourselves completely to the great healer. The modeller knows his creation, the potter the earthen vessel he has shaped. He may fashion it, refashion it, break it, or crush it. But nothing that is entrusted to his fingers can perish for ever. Whether he hands us bitter wormwood mixed with sadness or comforts us with soothing remedies, whether he uses the cauterer's iron or the surgeon's knife, we cannot doubt that he is working for our salvation, like a faithful and caring physician. He alone can, and often does, give us life by taking it away, as in the old Greek proverb about a 'kindly killer,' *εὔνους ὁ σφάκτης*.[33]

At this point you may perhaps ask me if the temptation ever crossed my mind to go over to one of the sects. To an old friend of proven loyalty like you I am ready to open my heart and pour out my feelings into your secret ear. Sometimes when I reflect on the perverse and persistent malice of certain people, I feel a natural impulse to seek revenge; but the feeling brushes past me so lightly that it never penetrates below the surface of my mind – a pinprick, not a wound. Before long the spirit remonstrates with the impulses of the flesh: 'What do you want to achieve by such an unholy thought? To avenge the wickedness of man, will you raise your godless hands against mother church, which made you a child of Christ at the holy font, which fed you with the word of God, which again and again nurtures and strengthens you with the sacrament? Will you, then, to hurt the wicked, become wicked yourself? To avenge a temporal wrong, will you

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31 Exod 7:14–12:29

32 The imagery here comes from the Song of Songs, which records the highly erotic declarations of love exchanged between a bridegroom and his bride. Exegetes traditionally dealt with this by interpreting it as an allegory of the love between Christ (the bridgroom) and the church (the bride). Because the bridegroom says of the bride: 'my dove, my undefiled is but one ... the only one of her mother,' she symbolizes the one true church. Cf n28 above.

33 *Adagia* III ii 7

suffer the irreparable loss of your soul? In aiming to harm your enemy, will you do more harm to yourself than an enemy could ever do? Reflect on your weak body. Consider how short a time remains to you. When you are already within the harbour, will you deliberately launch yourself into the sea? No revenge brings more satisfaction than making yourself each day a better man. All this turmoil is but for a season. What beckons is eternal. Keep this in mind.'

By such reflections I easily dispel the desires of the flesh that afflict me from time to time without putting me in danger. Yet it helps me to understand what has come down to us about Arius, Tertullian, Wycliffe, and others, who left the communion of the church because of the ill will of clerics and the scandalous behaviour of some of the monks, and out of their private pain brought public harm to the church. As for me, I would sooner lose my reputation or my life than sink into such a godless course.[34] A man of such a mind will not, I think, readily lapse into heresy. I only wish that, by sacrificing my life, I could cure the church of its many ills! It is true that I let myself go in responding to those who, under the pretense of zeal, brought false charges against my writings, but it was not the desire for revenge that drove me to it, but zeal for the holy truth in response to their zeal for malice. It is one thing to defend a heretical error, another to rebut a slanderous charge of heresy. Against other charges a man of gentle temper might choose to be silent; but to be mute in the face of an accusation of impiety if one's conscience is clear is itself impiety. Paul exhorts us to confess with our mouths unto salvation.[35] But not to raise one's voice against an allegation of heresy amounts almost to a denial of the faith.

You can guess the silly reasons that inspired these people to begin their attacks on me. I had promoted the cause of languages and polite letters to the great benefit of theology. At present they pretend to be in favour of these studies, although for more than forty years they have done everything in their power to get rid of them and to crush them wherever they have taken root. This is the seed from which the whole tragedy developed. I urged the theologians to give up their puzzles, which have more to do with pride than piety, and to devote themselves to the real sources found in Scripture and to the ancient Doctors of the church. I did not want to see the theology of the schools destroyed; what I wanted was a purer and more serious theology. This, unless I am mistaken, is to favour theology, not to

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34 See Ep 2082 n78.

35 Rom 10:10. In this Pauline passage, 'confess' has the sense of 'professing the faith.'

harm it. I exhorted monks to aspire to be what they are said to be, that is, men who have died to the world; I wanted them to trust less in external ceremonies and pay more attention to the true piety of the soul. Is this to hate the monks, or rather to wish them well? I was critical of those who take their vows lightly and of others who lure the young and inexperienced into the trap. I have never approved of those who leave the order without serious cause and without the approval of the pope. Indeed I have consoled and confirmed many waverers. I have ridiculed wrong-headed doctrine, which is the spring from which the most deadly trouble in the Christian church arises. This, I think, is to assist the church, not do it harm.

Often I have wished for popes and cardinals and bishops who reflected in themselves the piety of the apostles. It never entered my mind that anyone should be toppled from his position. I have never despised the rites and constitutions of the church, or taught that they deserved such treatment. But I have put first the commandments of God and shown how one could progress from ceremonies to higher things. And if, through man's carelessness, some abuse had crept in, I indicated how it could be put right – an action which the church has taken, not infrequently, in the past. There is no sacrament of the church that I have not always venerated, although I point out that the Fathers took up different positions on the subject of marriage.[36]

As for the sacrament of confession, I have never wavered in my opinion that it should be observed reverently, as something handed down to us by the spirit of Christ;[37] nor have I ever dared, nor would I dare, to approach the table of Christ, or depart from this life, without first confessing to a priest anything that lay heavily on my conscience. The only doubt I have had is whether confession, as it is practised today, was instituted by Christ himself; but this does not mean that I would not strongly favour this view, if someone could make a convincing case, backed by unassailable arguments.

I have never dreamed of abolishing the mass. I see no end to the debate about the Eucharist, yet I could never have been convinced, nor will I be convinced, that Christ, who is truth and love, would have suffered his beloved bride to persist in such an abominable error as to venerate a morsel of bread in place of himself. About the words of consecration, I have sometimes, I confess, felt the need for a fuller understanding. But in difficulties of this

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36 In the *Institutio christiani matrimonii* (Basel: Froben 1526), Erasmus argued that matrimony was indeed one of the seven sacraments, but he also pointed out that the early Fathers had not numbered it among the sacraments because they could not find that it conveyed sacramental grace. See CWE 69 232, 243.

37 Cf Epp 1299:66–74, 1300:17–3, 1582:95–110.

sort I am always ready to acquiesce in the judgment of the Catholic church. The doctrine, held by some, that the power to consecrate, absolve, and ordain may be assumed by anyone, I have always regarded as sheer lunacy.[38] I have always had a particular horror of sects and schisms; never to this day have I committed myself to any party, although there have been many factors pushing me in that direction. I have gathered no disciples around me, and when any appeared, I presented them to Christ.

What has hurt me most in the eyes of certain people – men who are ashamed of their ignorance and will not take the trouble to repair it – is the fact that in my *Annotationes* I point to many passages that were misunderstood by the learned doctors of an earlier age, and that, to induce the lazy to interest themselves in the philosophy of Christ, I have produced an intelligible version of the New Testament in a somewhat purer language.[39] For although these people imagine themselves splendid Latinists because they avoid obvious solecisms (though they do not manage even that very well), yet they are a long way from appreciating the subtleties of the Latin language. They do not recognize the proper meanings or the nuances of words, nor are they familiar with metaphors and wordplay, which impart to style much of its grace and charm. So it often happens that even though

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38 Given his view of the priesthood of all believers, Luther was able to argue in 1523 that if the existing bishops either could not or would not provide congregations with suitable pastors, then it was the case *That a Christian . . . Congregation Has the Right and Power to Judge All Teaching and to Call, Appoint, and dismiss Teachers . . .* (LW 39 305–14). He then went on to show, in the treatise *De instituendis ministris ecclesiae*, written later in the same year (LW 40 7–44), how this congregational ministry could be the basis for the voluntary organization of a territorial church with an elected episcopacy. (The actual organization of territorial churches in evangelical cities and territories, which was well under way by 1529, involved far more government participation than Luther had been able to imagine in 1523.) For their part, Anabaptists too adhered to the idea of a ministry of leaders chosen from among the brethren.

39 Allen took this to be a reference to the Paraphrases, and it is indeed possible to read the sentence in that way. But it is much more likely a reference to Erasmus' new Latin translation, first published in 1516 along with the Greek text. It depends on whether one understands *explanavi* to mean 'I have explained' the New Testament (by means of a paraphrase) or 'I have smoothed things out' (by means of a new and better translation). The latter option fits better with the reference to 'the lazy,' which is hardly an apt description of the eager consumers of the Paraphrases. It is more likely aimed at scholars who will not take the trouble to learn Greek and examine the original text for themselves.

I am saying the same thing as they, because I do not use the words that they are accustomed to hearing, they approve their own versions and denounce mine. I only wish that the schools would agree among themselves in formulating those scholastic rules to which the understanding of Scripture must now conform, as though aligned by a carpenter's square. The scholastic way of speaking is certainly acceptable – in scholastic debates, where the subtleties of argument must be made clear in whatever language is available. But in sermons and in books that are produced not just to teach but also to move the reader, how dreadfully flat that style appears! Among those who look for elegant writing, it simply causes laughter and even disgust.

But if these men had given a ready welcome to languages and polite letters, not only would their own field of study have been improved, but the world would not have been shaken by these tragic events. Furthermore, when some of the monks confidently believe that by upheavals of this sort they can restore their former tyranny, the old sophistical dialectic with its barbarous language, along with their old superstitions, they are, in my opinion, sadly mistaken. Or if we imagine that the present fire can be extinguished by the wealth of popes and cardinals and the resources of the bishops, I am afraid such a policy will not succeed or, if the fire is smothered for a while, it will shortly break out again. For how can we cure the disease by the very measures that caused it? Everyone is tugging on his own rope: let us rather all pull together on a single rope, I mean the rope that is Christ. No one should abandon the holy doctrines of the church because of human immorality. But it would simply be Christian prudence to tear out once and for all the woody stump and roots of these evils so that they cannot readily send up shoots again.

My own private troubles I bear more easily because I know they will not last long. Already I am failing, and I know that my last hour is not far off. But I cannot bear without deep pain the general ruin of the church. If this storm affected only those who caused it, it would be tolerable. But think how many good priests, honest monks, and holy virgins are being cruelly treated now. And if we consider what the opening moves have been like, it seems likely that worse will follow, unless God in his goodness and mercy turns it away. I hope his mercy will not fail us if with pure hearts we flee to it for refuge. May he bring comfort to your heart and to the hearts of all the afflicted, my dearest friend in Christ.

Basel, 30 March 1529

Erasmus of Rotterdam, in my own hand (which I fear you may not be able to read without great difficulty)

2137 / From Hermann von Neuenahr Speyer, 31 March 1529

The autograph of this letter (= Ep 104 in Förstemann/Günther) was in the Burscher collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It was written from Speyer, where Count Hermann (Ep 1926), provost of the Cologne cathedral chapter and chancellor of the University of Cologne, was attending the imperial diet as part of the Cologne delegation.

Cordial greetings. Various accounts have reached us here of the recent disturbances in your city.[1] Whatever the situation is, I cannot think it anything but an ominous prelude to a future uprising. It seems that the current widespread gloom will soon erupt into open disaster. I wish I could conveniently live somewhere else until Lady Fortune comes down on one side or the other; but at present the world is such an unpeaceful place that I do not know where one could live in safety. So we must await the outcome, and let God carry out his will.

I am sending you a second time those little trifles that I sent last year.[2] I have taken your advice and corrected some careless slips; in the meantime other errors may perhaps have crept in. Now if you find anything in the actual content of the work that ought to be corrected or handled more carefully, please let me have your comments when you have a free moment. You thought, if I am not mistaken, that I should be more careful about establishing a scriptural foundation for my case, setting out the principle that it is on the authority of the word of God that heresies are to be identified. But I do not see how I could treat this more fully than I have; for heresies and sects are mentioned very rarely in Scripture: apart from the apostolic letters, you will find hardly anything about heresy and heretics. Could you give me some advice on how I should deal with this satisfactorily? You pointed out before that I had made some wordy and barely relevant remarks about the sacraments, but you did not identify the passages. You will see that I have

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2137

1 See Ep 2097 n1.

2 Evidently the manuscript of a book on the best way to deal with the religious crisis in Germany. It may have been the 'little book' returned to Count Hermann in January 1528 with an accompanying letter, such as the one referred to in lines 10, 13–15, 20–2 below; see Ep 1926:5–6 with n3 (where the 'little book' is tentatively identified as the copy of Faustus of Riez that Count Hermann had lent Erasmus). No book of the sort described here was ever published under Neuenahr's name, but it could have been circulated anonymously; see lines 26–8.

pruned certain parts of the argument considerably, but I must ask you again to obelize those passages that you have in mind. Perhaps there are places where something should be added or deleted – I leave the decision entirely to your honest judgment. After that I shall have a fair copy sent out, either under a pseudonym or anonymously,[3] to a number of people whose authority will carry weight in this matter; for I realize that it will be necessary to make use of intermediaries to soften the reactions of the princes. Otherwise, things will descend rapidly into violent wrangling. Monarchs depend heavily on the advice of flatterers. Lutherans are so much the slaves of their passions that they make the situation utterly hopeless.

My prince values your authority very highly, especially in these matters.[4] So I took the chance, not long after the event, to talk to him at length about the upheavals at Basel and eventually got round to persuading him to invite you to Cologne.[5] I did not expect so quick a response, but he immediately asked me to let you know that it would give him great pleasure if you moved here as soon as possible, and that the move would not involve any expense on your part. You could make your way to Cologne as soon as the diet is over, which doubtless will happen in three weeks.[6] You will find here not only a defender against rabid sophists, but if the need should arise, you will have your club-wielding Hercules.

So I wanted to write and pass this message on to you, so that at least you would understand my prince's feelings, even if your personal circumstances lead you in a different direction. But if you are still of the opinion that you need to move, I do not see a more suitable place for you than Cologne, where you will have friends who can assist you even in personal matters and a prince who is so favourably disposed to you that you could think of him as a patron. But it is for you to determine what is best for you to do. Please write back and let me know what you decide. I am burdened with so many varied responsibilities that I hardly know where to turn; it was only with difficulty that I managed to finish this letter by lamplight. Farewell, dear Erasmus.

From Speyer, 31 March 1529

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3 Here the text has the Greek adjective *ἀνόμαλον*, which is a misspelling of *ἀνώμαλον*, meaning 'anomalous.' It is clear, however, that the intention was to write *ἀνώνυμον*, which means 'anonymous.'

4 Hermann von Wied (Ep 1976), archbishop-elector of Cologne

5 Cf Ep 2120:120–21. Ep 2146 indicates that Erasmus had already ruled out Cologne as a refuge.

6 The recess of the diet was dated 22 April 1529.

Tear up this letter when you have read it.

Your friend Hermann von Neuenahr, provost of Cologne, etc

To the learned Erasmus of Rotterdam, eminent theologian and most honest of friends. In Basel or Freiburg

2138 / To Antoine Bercin

Basel, 1 April 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is the first of a series of letters to Besançon (Epp 2138–42). Bercin's reply is Ep 2148. It is possible that this brief note was written at the suggestion of Claudius Janandus; see Ep 2141:21–2. A book was included with it; see Ep 2148:1, 15.

Antoine Bercin (c 1490–1538) was canon and scholaster in the chapter at Besançon. Erasmus had met him on his visit to that city in 1524 (Ep 1610:57).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE SCHOLASTER OF BESANÇON, GREETING

I have neither occasion nor excuse for writing to you, distinguished sir, except that when I learned from the letters of my friends that you have shown yourself as generous and kind a patron of humane studies as you are yourself a most cultured and learned man, I thought it my duty to thank you, first on behalf of learning and then on my own behalf since, being the warm-hearted person you are, you feel more affectionately towards Erasmus than he deserves. So this letter is a sort of affidavit, affirming my obligation to you on these two counts. If you will consent to use my services in any matter, I shall not feel at liberty to refuse you anything that is within my power to provide; indeed, nothing would give me greater pleasure than to oblige you in any way I can. If you do not decline my suggestion, please count your humble servant at least within the outer circle of your friends. If you have any doubts about this, put me to the test.

I shall not hold you up any longer. I wish you every happiness.

Basel, 1 April 1529

2139 / To Léonard de Gruyères

Basel, 1 April 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Léonard de Gruyères (Ep 1534), was cathedral canon and official (chief judge of the diocesan court) at Besançon, where Erasmus had met him during his visit to that city in 1524 (Ep 1610). He was one of those in Besançon whom Erasmus had recently contacted about the possibility of moving there; see Ep 2112:6–8.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO LÉONARD, OFFICIAL OF BESANÇON, GREETING

As I was writing this, the courier announced that the wine was on its way and would be here today or tomorrow.[1] From Étienne's letter to Hieronymus Froben I gathered that no payment was made to the courier at your end.[2] I am glad of that, but I wish some amount had been settled on. He wants three crowns,[3] which I shall gladly give him. If he had demanded more, I would have had to give him whatever he wanted.

The feelings towards me that you express in your letter,[4] brief though it was, are sweeter to me than any wine, though it too is most welcome. I think the letter I wrote a few days ago[5] has been sent off with the servant of a German count.[6] I was already much indebted to you, my generous friend, but now your Erasmus is completely in your debt. Even if you don't suggest a way, I shall try to find an opportunity to repay you, at least in part, for this kindness, so willingly offered. But I would be most grateful if you would not be shy about telling me how, in this situation, I can avoid the charge of ingratitude.

At this time I am sending my Seneca to you;[7] he will be a delightful companion if you can find a little break from your heavy responsibilities. Augustine is running strongly towards the finishing line, but is not yet complete.[8] Farewell.

Basel, 1 April 1529

2140 / To Étienne Desprez Basel, 1 April 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum.*

Étienne Desprez (documented 1529–36) was rector of the school at Besançon, which was partly under the jurisdiction of the chapter. Starting with this letter,

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2139

1 On Erasmus' partiality to Burgundian wine, see Ep 2085 n1.
2 The letter of Étienne Desprez to Froben is not extant. For more about its contents, see Ep 2140.
3 Presumably the new English double-rose crowns, worth 5s 0d or 60d sterling, but possibly the current French 'crowns,' ie the *écu à la couronne au soleil*, now worth about 56d sterling and 40s or £2 tournois. Cf Ep 2126 n36.
4 Not extant
5 Not extant
6 Possibly the count mentioned in Ep 2130:5
7 Ep 2091
8 Ep 2157

he and Erasmus corresponded until the latter's death, chiefly about shipping wine to Erasmus and Froben books to Besançon (cf Epp 2401A, 2895, 3115).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ÉTIENNE DESPREZ, GREETING

I thank you most sincerely, as indeed I ought to, my dear Étienne, for the service you have carried out so conscientiously on my behalf. I only wish you had discharged this extra little duty and let me know what sum you had settled on with the courier. As it is, I shall have to give him whatever he chooses to ask. In fact, he wants three crowns.[1] I have not yet seen the casks. I am sending you the books that you want from Hieronymus,[2] since he has not yet returned from the Frankfurt fair.[3] I sent you a letter by the servant of a count.[4] I gather it had not arrived when you wrote. From now on I shall include my dear Étienne among my special friends, and if you ask me for any assistance, you will not ask in vain, provided it is something in my power to provide. Farewell.

Basel, 1 April 1529

2141 / To Claudius Janandus

Basel, 1 April 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Claudius Janandus (documented 1529–52) had just spent a few months in Basel studying with Bonifacius Amerbach (AK Ep 1328). During his time in Basel, he had met Christoph von Carlowitz (line 10) and Erasmus. This letter, written shortly after his departure, is apparently Erasmus' answer to one written from Besançon (AK Ep 1346:26–7). Little else is known of Janandus other than that he became a respected lawyer in Lons-le Saunier.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO CLAUDIUS JANANDUS, GREETING

I count myself very lucky, my dear Claudius, that our conversation won me a new friend who is not just learned, but wise, frank, and independent, just the sort of friend in which I take a particular delight. From now on I shall be on my guard against Midas,[1] although there was something artificial about

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2140

1 See Ep 2139 n3.
2 Froben (Ep 2112 n9)
3 Froben returned before Erasmus left Basel; see Ep 2147:6–7.
4 Cf Ep 2139:11–12.

2141

1 The proverbial king of Phrygia with the 'golden touch.' See *Adagia* I vi 24. But to whom is Erasmus referring? Allen's note is still apt: 'I have no clue.'

his letter. You have earned my love for carefully sending on the letter to Dôle. Sucket sent his reply by some vagabond who happened to turn up,[2] a tattered, starving wretch, poorer than Irus.[3] I sent him away clothed and with money in his purse.

Carlowitz has left here for Speyer with letters from me recommending him to Ferdinand, Duke George, and some other notables,[4] although the duke is not there, nor likely to be. Two days ago I received a letter from him.[5] He is having problems with his leg, which may be dangerous. Some people suspect it is a bluff. He knows what is going on at Speyer and is afraid to offend Duke John and the landgrave of Hessen, the one, if I am not mistaken, a relative by marriage,[6] the other a kinsman.[7] But this is no more than guesswork.

Be assured of this, that henceforth the name of Claudius Janandus will be included among those of my closest friends. Nothing would please me more than to oblige you with some little service, if only you would be good enough to tell me what you would like me to do. Farewell.

1 April 1529, from Froben's garden[8]

As you can see, the paper has run out. I wrote a brief note to the scholaster,[9] using, as they say, the same oil.[10]

2142 / To François Bonvalot Basel, 1 April 1529

François Bonvalot (d 1560), who belonged to a wealthy and powerful family in Besançon and had acquired a doctorate in law at the University of Dôle, was a canon of Besançon and the treasurer of the chapter. He went on to become abbot of Saint-Vincent at Besançon (1532) and abbot of Luxeuil (1542). The culmination of his ecclesiastical career was his term as administrator of the

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2 See Ep 2135 n1.
3 A beggar in Homer's *Odyssey* proverbial for his poverty; *Adagia* I vi 76
4 Epp 2121–3 to Bernhard von Cles, Simon Pistoris, and Balthasar Merklin. The letters to Ferdinand and Duke George are not extant.
5 Ep 2124
6 Landgrave Philip 'the Magnanimous' of Hessen (1504–67), who shared with the electors of Saxony the distinction of being the foremost champion of the Reformation, was the son-in-law of Duke George of Saxony, having married his daughter Christina in 1523.
7 Duke George (of Albertine Saxony) was the cousin of Elector John (of Ernestine Saxony).
8 See Ep 1756:6–8.
9 Ep 2138
10 Ie the same expenditure of time and effort; see *Adagia* I iv 62, and cf Epp 2082:251–2, 2165:4–5.

archdiocese of Besançon (1545–56) during the minority of the archbishop-elect, Claude de la Baume. Bonvalot was one of the several friends in Besançon who advised Erasmus not to move there because of political unrest in the city arising out of the struggle for power between the town council, the archbishop, and the chapter (Ep 2112:10–11). Much of Erasmus' surviving correspondence with Bonvalot, including this letter, which was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, deals with shipments of Burgundian wine to Erasmus.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE TREASURER FRANÇOIS, GREETING

I believe my letter reached you;[1] it was absolutely barefaced about sending the wine. But need and shame 'go ill together and tarry not in the same place.'[2] The courier brought the news that two casks were on their way from the official.[3] So there is no need for you to trouble yourself further, at least about this matter. If, however, in the goodness of your heart you have decided to put Erasmus even more deeply in your debt than he has already become, I would like, if this is at all possible, another little cask of the old wine. If it is not possible, it doesn't matter. However, let me know what financial arrangement you make with the carrier, for nothing is more annoying than to argue with men of that sort. If the carrier who is here now had asked for eight crowns,[4] I would have had to pay that amount. And please do not be too shy to tell me in a word or two what I could do in return to avoid the reproach of ingratitude. May the Lord keep you safe and all who are dearest to you.

Basel, 1 April 1529

2143 / To Johannes Cochlaeus Basel, 1 April 1529

This letter, which was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, is in sequence to Ep 2120, from which one sentence (lines 38–40) is quoted. The paragraph on Cassiodorus, moreover, seems to follow from the allusion in Ep 2120:76 to Cochlaeus' dedication to More of his edition of a work by that author. On the other hand, Erasmus here addresses himself to subjects not mentioned in Ep

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2142

1 Not extant
2 Ovid *Metamorphoses* 2.846
3 Ie Léonard de Gruyères, the chief judge of the diocese court at Besançon (Ep 2139)
4 He had asked for three; cf Ep 2139:4–5 with n3, 2140:6.

2120, which suggests that he is also responding to the content of other letters no longer extant (cf line 38), and perhaps also to passages in books sent to him.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANNES COCHLAEUS, GREETING

I received the books you sent me. I have already devoured the first of these and was so astonished at its fire and ingenuity and its melodramatic tone that I was inclined to suspect Girolamo Aleandro of being the father of the piece.[1] As for the other work,[2] I have only sampled a few pages. (The move, you see, has thrown everything into confusion. I have so many letters and books and papers that I think the emperor must move his court with less fuss. When I settled here, I again searched through my papers, but could not find what I wanted.)[3] Judging by the sample I have read, I like the man's wit well enough, and I would not mind seeing Luther's violent spirit rebuked by witty treatment of this sort if such impudence, far from mending divisions in the church, did not make the problem worse. I know nothing of the respect which, according to you, he shows towards me. He is completely unknown to me. But if he wishes me well, I shall not refuse to reciprocate his good will.

Cassiodorus was a man blessed by rank and position, and both learned and pious, whom I am ready to count among the fortunate and the famous, but I cannot fully approve his ambition to cover all subjects with his pen, both secular and sacred.[4] First of all, even supposing that he possessed every

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2143

1 Perhaps the *Fasciculus calumniarum Lutheri*; see Ep 2120 n29. For Erasmus' recent fears of Aleandro's machinations against him, see Epp 1987, 2029, 2077.

2 Identified by Allen as the *Ad Luderanorum famosum libellum ... responsio* of Jan Horák (Johann Jacobi Hasenberg), a favourite of Duke George who joined Cochlaeus in publishing polemics against Luther. See Allen Ep 2247 introduction.

3 As Allen rightly pointed out, the passage in parentheses does not correspond to the facts of Erasmus' move to Freiburg. While it is true that the greater part of Erasmus' belongings had already preceded him to Freiburg (Epp 2136:18–20, 2145:30–1, 2202:10–11), he himself did not leave Basel until 13 April (Ep 2149 introduction). Allen surmised that the enclosed passage, or at least the final sentence of it, was inserted at the time of publication.

4 Following a distinguished career of public service under King Theodoric and his successors, Cassiodorus (c 490–c 583) retired to his ancestral estate in Calabria, where he established (c 540) the monastery of Vivarium. Already a prolific writer on politics and public affairs, he henceforth devoted his attention to sacred matters. As an ecclesiastical writer, he is remembered for, among other

talent in a very high degree, is there anyone who can excel in every single sphere? It would be more helpful to the cause of learning if everyone pursued that part of it in which he excels. St Augustine too, when he was still a catechumen, seems to have been seized with some similar ambition, and yet we see how insipid he could be in some of his early exercises,[5] for all the godlike genius he displays elsewhere. But Cassiodorus comes across as someone with a modest talent and a less than felicitous command of language. So many people, both in Greek and in Latin, have written on the Scriptures, no one at greater length than Augustine. What need was there for Cassiodorus to follow in their line?[6] And I believe that in all the other subjects that he treated he was always the same. But Bruno, whom some Carthusians want to be recognized as the founder of their order, seems to have made much worse use of his leisure. It is my opinion that he wrote a very dull work on the Psalms of David,[7] especially coming, as he did, after so many famous commentators. However, I wish all Cassiodorus' works had survived, if only because of the many authors from whom he selected material for his own work. I like the man's modesty and honesty, qualities that I always admire also in the works of St Gregory.

More than once recently you have inserted into your letters the suggestion that I leave to others the labour of correcting the work of ancient writers and deal with disciplines and subjects which, as you claim, no one else can handle with equal success.[8] I do not doubt, good sir, that there are people who could do as well as I in emending texts, but I do not see anyone willing to take as much trouble over it. As for my being able to write what

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things, the *Historia tripartita*, a compilation of selections from the Greek ecclesiastical historians Theodoret, Sozomen, and Socrates that was much used as a historical source in the Middle Ages, and for the *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium litterarum*, which laid out for his monks a programme of biblical study that emphasized the importance of grammar and rhetoric and a knowledge of the secular works that he was careful to place in the monastery library.

5 The Latin (in fact the word is Greek) is *progymnasmata* 'warm-up exercises.' It is not clear to what works Erasmus is referring.

6 Cassiodorus' chief contribution to biblical exegesis was his *Expositio in Psalterium*, which had been published by Johann Amerbach at Basel in 1491.

7 The author of the Psalter referred to here was Bruno of Carinthia, bishop of Würzburg (d 1045). Cochlaeus would republish the work in 1533: *Psalterium beati Brunonis, episcopi quondam Herbipolensis: a Johanne Cochleo presbytero restitutum ...* (Leipzig: Nicolaus Faber). There were apparently some Carthusians who wanted to attribute the work to the founder of their order, Bruno of Cologne (c 1040–1106).

8 Cf Ep 2120:17–21.

no one else could,[9] you will convince me of this when you demonstrate that I am covered with peacock feathers. Yet I love you for these kindly fantasies of yours about me. The truth is that for some time now I have been embarrassed by my earlier presumption in tackling much that lay beyond my powers. My years and my temperament are demanding that I take a different course, that I leave the writer's arena for good,[10] especially in this mad age when it is a sin either to speak well or to speak badly.

The doubts you seem to feel as to whether the king of England was himself responsible for the little treatise and the two letters he wrote in condemnation of Luther[11] are shared by many.[12] This is not surprising, since up to now, and especially in Germany, a literate prince was considered a sort of miracle. But while I would not argue that no one helped him in his work – sometimes the most erudite scholars take help from their friends – yet I have no hesitation in stating that he was the author and only begetter of the works he published. He was born of a father whose equal for nicety of judgment you would be hard put to find. His mother likewise was a woman of robust intellect,[13] who was distinguished by exceptional good sense and piety. While still a child, Henry was introduced to learning. He had a quick and lively mind that was more than capable of carrying out anything he attempted. Nor did he attempt anything that he did not carry through. He had such natural ability that even in such commonplace activities as riding and throwing the javelin he left everyone else behind. You would say he had a natural gift to succeed in everything. There was no cultural activity in which he did not rise above the average. He showed a wonderful aptitude for the mathematical disciplines. He never let slip an opportunity to learn. Whenever business of state allows him some free time, he either reads or takes part in a disputation, something he likes to do, arguing with great courtesy and composure. You would think you were listening to a college fellow,

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9 Cf Ep 2120:22, 40–1.

10 The text here reads literally 'present myself with the wooden sword.' On retiring a gladiator was presented with a wooden sword; see *Adagia* I ix 24, and cf Ep 2136 n13.

11 The little treatise was Henry VIII's *Assertio septem sacramentorum adversus Martinum Lutherum* (Ep 1275 n25), and the two letters were probably the two undated prefaces, addressed to Leo X and the reader. Cf Ep 1290 n2.

12 See Ep 1227 n3. Erasmus was convinced that Henry himself was the author; see Ep 1313:74–92. If Cochlaeus' doubts were expressed in a manuscript of the *Fasciculus* (see n1 above) that was sent to Erasmus, the passage may have been removed as a result of Erasmus' assurances here.

13 Elizabeth of York (d 1503)

not a king. Sometimes he prepares himself for these jousts by reading the schoolmen – Thomas, for example, or Scotus or Gabriel.[14]

As for his skill in language, I am sending you a sample from which you can infer how much he has advanced over the years. For he wrote all of this letter in his own hand when he was a mere youth.[15] When I was staying in Venice I wrote to him, expressing my sorrow over the death of King Philip, my prince.[16] The letter began somewhat like this (for I did not keep a copy): 'We have received here a report that is too sad for anyone willingly to believe it, but too persistent to appear altogether unfounded, to the effect that Prince Philip has departed this life . . .' He appreciated right away the attractiveness of the trope, and began his letter with a similar turn of phrase. Of course I recognized his handwriting but, to be frank, I had some suspicions that in content and wording he had relied on the help of others. When William Mountjoy could find no arguments to shake that suspicion from my mind, he gave up and hid his feelings until he could be better informed about the matter. One day when we were chatting alone, he produced a number of Henry's letters, some to Mountjoy himself and some to others, including the letter in which he had replied to mine. These letters showed traces of reflection, additions, deletions, corrections, and modifications. In all of them you could have observed the first hand providing a sort of sketch, then the second hand, then a third, and sometimes a fourth. All deletions and additions were in the same hand. At this point I had no good reason to hold out; so being defeated by the strength of the case, I abandoned all my suspicions. I do not doubt, my dear Cochlaeus, that you would do the same if you had a closer acquaintance with the extraordinary talents of the king. Farewell.

Basel, 1 April 1529

2144 / From Pietro Bembo Padua, 4 April 1529

This letter was first published in the *Epistolae floridae*. It is Bembo's response to Ep 2106. Sent to Erasmus via Karel Uutenhove in Venice (see Allen's introduction), the letter still had not reached Erasmus at Freiburg on 1 July (Ep

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14 Gabriel Biel (c 1420–1495), professor of theology at Tübingen from 1484 and one of the most influential theologians of his day

15 Ep 206, which follows this letter in the *Opus epistolarum*

16 Erasmus' memory is playing tricks on him. There is no reason to suppose that he visited Venice before the end of 1507 (Epp 207, 209). The letter quoted here, Ep 204, was almost surely written from Bologna on about 17 November 1506. Prince Philip had died on 25 September 1506.

2188:2–4), and may not have arrived until the following February (see Allen Ep 2269:87–8). At all events, Erasmus did not reply until 25 March 1530 (Ep 2290).

PIETRO BEMBO TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, CORDIAL GREETINGS

Your letter brought me incredible pleasure, especially since it was written in your own hand; for I learned from it that there was no truth in the vague rumours reaching us here that you were suffering from some unnamed illness that posed a grave threat to your life.[1] Then my pleasure was increased by the sensible and delightful conversation of your man Karel,[2] whom you commend to me; for he assured me that you were well and that, so far as he knew, you had suffered no personal harm apart from the general upheavals to which you allude and which affected everyone in that region.[3] So there could have been no happier news than that contained in your letter or in Karel's report. There are not many men who have adorned and enriched our age by their writings; so it fell on me as a heavier blow that you, who have succeeded in this more than anyone else and are now reaching even greater heights, were being snatched away from Germany and France, where you are especially beloved, and also from Italy, whose high regard for you is amply attested by the reception of your own writings, which have delighted the eyes and minds of all our people and filled our libraries.

So I repeat, your letter was a great joy to me. I see that I share with you a similar experience: for you were anxious about my plight, thinking perhaps that I had been in Rome during those wretched days of awful violence when the city was plundered and laid waste, but then, as you put it, a letter from my friend Sadoleto freed you from worry. In that letter you learned that I had moved to Padua long before these events.[4] After many trials I took myself to that city as a safe haven in a storm where I could live in peace. I wish that Sadoleto himself had held firm to that opinion and that, once he had gone to Provence for peace and quiet, he had not allowed himself to be sucked back by the tides of Rome.[5] Had he done so, fate would have had less hold on him. But he, the most upright of men, could not allow

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2144

1 Cf Epp 2154:1–3, 2174:8–9, and Allen Epp 2209:42–4, 2324:9–11.
2 Uutenhove (Ep 2093), who had delivered Ep 2106
3 See Ep 2097 n1, and cf lines 36–9 below.
4 Ep 2074:36–41
5 Sadoleto had gone to Carpentras in 1523 but before the year was out he had been recalled to Rome by Clement VII to resume his duties as papal secretary. It was thus that he only narrowly escaped the city before it was sacked by the emperor's troops in May 1527; see Ep 2074:23–6.

the call and summons of the pope to go unanswered. So when bidden, he returned. He is not so much to be blamed for the loss he suffered there, which happened also to many other great and famous men, as to be congratulated for being the only one to escape and leave Rome before it was captured. In doing what he did, he made an all too human mistake, though it might even be considered a rational step to have taken. This was the ultimate test of courage and determination and of an almost godlike resolution.

But enough about this. I was disturbed to hear that your studies have been disrupted by rioting that amounts almost to a state of war, and that among you the ancient worship of Almighty God and the holy sacraments, which were handed down to us by our ancestors, have all been swept away.[6] I am sorry for the troubles that have befallen you, a man already in his declining years, who finds peace in the contemplation of an excellent character, strengthened through good judgment and a long life, and in the practice of virtue. Yet who does not now have better cause and stronger reasons to remonstrate with Fortune? If all goes well with your health, your other ills may some day be healed or, if not, they will have to be endured, for this is the human lot. This is especially true of the wise, for as long as they live, nothing can affect the movements of their minds, their resolution, or their piety.

Karel Uutenhove will have the same place with me as he has with you. Your commendation alone is for me a binding obligation, so I shall do for him anything within my power that may be of service to him, and not just, as you put it in your letter, if it causes me no inconvenience; indeed there is nothing I will not share with him, my friends, my house, even my money (for which you make an exception) if he wishes to make use of it. If you will consider everything I possess and my own self as being just as much yours as anything else you own, I shall not prove your judgment wrong. This is a debt I owe to your merits and your learning as well as to the good opinion you have of me. Farewell.

4 April 1529, at Padua

2145 / To Anton Fugger Basel, 5 April 1529

In 1525 Anton Fugger (1493–1550) succeeded his uncle Jakob as head of the famous international banking firm that was the financial prop of the chronically impecunious Hapsburgs. In this year, for example, credits extended to King Ferdinand by the Fugger bank helped him save Vienna from siege by the

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6 See n3 above.

Anton Fugger
Chalk drawing by Albrecht Dürer
Kunstsammlungen Veste Coburg

Ottoman Turks. As a reward for this and other services, Anton was ennobled in 1530 and in 1534 granted the right to coin his own money.

This letter, which was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, is Erasmus' response to the first of several efforts by Anton to persuade him to make Augsburg his permanent residence. As in this instance, Erasmus always responded negatively, but with appropriate gratitude for the generous terms of Anton's offers.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ANTON FUGGER, GREETING

Distinguished sir, the smaller my services have been to you, the greater my debt for the favourable opinion you have formed of me and for your kindness so freely and generously offered.[1] Far from treating it lightly, I gladly admit that I feel as deeply obliged to you as if I had accepted what you offer. Indeed, I consider myself richly blessed to know that Anton Fugger, a man whose name is on everyone's lips, is so devoted a friend. I have been told by many people that Augsburg is a city which, for splendour, wealth, and refinement, takes second place to none in Germany. Some months ago I was invited to go there by the bishop of your city, a man, as you well know, equally celebrated for piety and learning.[2] Similarly, his Majesty King Ferdinand had earlier invited me to Vienna,[3] promising me five hundred gold florins each year without asking anything in return.[4] Since the prince has been a strong supporter of mine in every way, I was most eager to do everything in my power to please him. But I can scarcely keep my poor body together even when I stay at home and live, as the saying goes, like an invalid, that is, drag out a wretched existence.[5] So far from thinking it safe to expose my weak body to a long journey (even if there were no danger from brigands), I cannot put on new clothes or change my wine without immediately

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2145

1 For the terms of the offer see Epp 2159:17–19, 2193:23–5, and Allen Ep 2222:3–8.

2 On the invitation from Christoph von Stadion in the summer of 1528, see Ep 2029:98–9.

3 See Epp 2000, 2005–6.

4 The text does not indicate whether these gold coins are Florentine florins (worth about 4s 8d sterling), or imitation florins of the same value, or Rhenish florins (worth 3s 4d sterling). See Ep 2000:17–21 (where the pension offered was 400 gold florins) with n3.

5 Cf CWE 29 48 (*Encomium medicinae*): 'Now the old saw is frequently heard, on the lips of the hard drinkers in their cups, that a man who lives according to medical advice lives miserably.'

placing my life in jeopardy. For many years now I have grown accustomed to this nest of mine, and even the Greek proverb warns us that we must not transplant an old tree.[6]

All the same, it is not open to me to stay here, not because anyone is pushing me out, but because my enemies, who look for any opportunity to plant a false rumour about me, would interpret my staying on as an admission that I approve of everything that is happening here. If I decided to stay on, I could live here on good terms with the men who are now in charge. But since, as I say, this is a choice that is neither safe for me nor would it be approved by God or the princes on whose support I rely, I have decided to move to Freiburg, which is close by. I have already sent on those possessions that I cherish most,[7] and the council has made available a very fine house, which was planned originally for the emperor Maximilian,[8] and they promise all kinds of favours besides. King Ferdinand himself wrote a most friendly letter commending me to the council.[9] I would have been there long ago, had I not been held up by a wicked cold.[10] If the move turns out well, I shall perhaps find the courage to travel farther; for since I must leave Basel, I should prefer to be farther away.

You write that where you live, through the vigilance of a strong and wise council, measures have been taken to assure the liberty of all. I congratulate your commonwealth on this,[11] although a rumour had reached us here that two or three of your churches had gone over to the Lutherans, the same number to the Zwinglians, leaving five to the true church, a state of affairs that cannot be anything but perilous.[12] It is not unusual, however, for rumour to lie. I hope that the Lord in his mercy will use the princes to bring

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6 *Adagia* I iv 43
7 See Ep 2143 n3.
8 See Ep 2112 n4.
9 See Ep 2090 introduction.
10 Ep 2125 n3
11 Erasmus here uses the term *respublica* to describe Augsburg, which was a self-governing 'free imperial city' owing allegiance directly to the emperor without mediation through any of the imperial princes. In the Latin-German lexica of the day, the prescribed translation of *respublica* was *der gemain nutz* or *das gemain wohl*, 'the common good,' 'the common weal,' or, when applied to a polity, 'the commonwealth.'
12 In the period 1524–30 the Reformation in both its Lutheran and Zwinglian forms took root in Augsburg, and by 1529 evangelical worship was being conducted in four churches: St Anne, Holy Cross, St Ulrich, and St George. See Friedrich Roth *Augsburgs Reformationsgeschichte* 2nd ed (Munich 1901) I 294–7.

an end some day to these evils. I do not doubt that you will accept and understand my excuses, which are more valid than either of us would wish. If only you could offer me better health, just as you offer travel money and an annual pension! But perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to do what is not possible now. Meantime, if there is any way in which I can show my gratitude, you will find me just as ready to help as if I had made use of your kind offer. For a grateful heart always counts a sincere offer as a favour already received. I hope you and yours are all flourishing.

Basel, 5 April 1529

2146 / From Johann von Vlatten Speyer, 7 April 1529

The autograph of this letter, which was first published as Ep 105 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). Although Vlatten (Ep 1390) here refers to Ep 2088 (line 16), he addresses matters raised in intervening correspondence that is no longer extant.

Greetings. I am replying to you later than I had intended, dear Erasmus, best by far of all my friends. You will have to blame the letter I wrote on your behalf to our illustrious prince,[1] to which, to my surprise, he has not yet replied. Doubtless there has been some stupid blunder due to carelessness on the part of the couriers. I do not, however, doubt that the prince sincerely intends to invite you to his lands on honourable terms. Please God, this may be as satisfactory to you as it will be most welcome to the prince and the nobles. So I beg you, if you get the opportunity to reply, to kindly let me know what place within the province of our prince you would find most suitable for your immortal studies; this would assist the prince and the lords to suggest something useful that will meet your wishes. Since you think that Cologne and Aachen would not suit you,[2] I say nothing about them now. But I beg you with all my heart not to misunderstand our proposal about the two cities; you can rest assured that it was inspired by the most thoughtful and friendly intentions.

As for your mentioning me again at the end of your *Ciceronianus*,[3] I can only offer you what thanks I can, not what you deserve. Farewell, and go on loving me.

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2146

1 Duke John III of Jülich-Cleves (1490–1539). The letter to him is not extant.

2 It appears that Erasmus had already declined an invitation to those places. For another invitation to Cologne at about this time, see Ep 2137:33–50.

3 In Ep 2088, printed at the end of the second edition

Our friend Konrad Heresbach[4] is veritably bursting with benefices; two months ago he obtained a prebend at Xanten, likewise the provostship of Rees. Farewell again.

Speyer, 7 April 1529. In haste

Yours, Johann von Vlatten

To that great scholar Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, theologian, and most honoured friend

2147 / To Johannes Oecolampadius [Basel, c 10 April 1529]

This letter was first published in the *Pirckheimeri Opera* from a copy that Erasmus had sent to Pirckheimer; see Epp 2158:50–3, 2196:90–2.

In recent years the once close friendship between Erasmus and Oecolampadius (Ep 224:30n) had been severely strained by the latter's emergence as a champion of the Reformation in its Zwinglian form and his role as the principal reformer in Basel. Nonetheless, despite the tensions between them, there was never a public breach. Now, on the eve of Erasmus' departure from Basel for Freiburg (13 April), Oecolampadius was reluctant to let him go, while Erasmus was eager that they should part company on tolerably good terms. This letter invites Oecolampadius to an interview in the afternoon. From Erasmus' later accounts (Epp 2158, 2196:92–9), it appears that Oecolampadius came at once and that Erasmus made clear the finality of his decision to leave by pointing out that his furniture and his money had already preceded him to Freiburg (cf Epp 2136:18–20, 2145:30–1). Moreover, in a letter of 11 April cited in Allen's introduction, Oecolampadius writes of Erasmus' departure in a way that seems to indicate that the interview had already taken place. On that basis, Allen assigned the conjectural day-date.

A COPY OF THE NOTE WRITTEN BY DESIDERIUS ERASMUS TO JOHANNES OECOLAMPADIUS THAT I MENTIONED IN THE PREVIOUS LETTER

Several days ago I wanted to invite you to come and talk with me, but the time was not suitable and I was suffering from a lingering cold associated with a fever.[1] I was afraid that this might give rise to gossip among the people, since things were less settled then than they are now. Today Hieronymus Froben told me that some people suspect hostility in my attitude

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4 Ep 1316

2147

1 See Ep 2125 n3.

towards you, on the ground, first, that I made an unfavourable reference to you in my writings, and secondly, that recently I went out of my way to avoid meeting you. Both these rumours, I assure you, are fictions, quite without foundation. I have never penned a single letter in which my intention was to hurt you – or if I did write something of that sort, it was not you I had in mind.

When my colloquy called *Cyclops* was being printed,[2] some people in Froben's press suspected the remark about a man with a sheep on his head and a fox in his heart and a long nose was meant for you, although it is clear that it refers to my servant Nicolaas Kan;[3] he was most eager to be mentioned in the *Colloquies*. He wears such a cap and has a long nose; he also has a swarthy complexion and black hair. I had never heard that you wore a similar cap, not until that moment.[4] I am not so infantile as to make that sort of silly joke about decent people. And Polyphemus was courting celebrity: he went around carrying a beautifully embellished copy of the Gospels, though it would be hard to find anything more debased than the life he led.[5] These are the facts about what I wrote.[6]

As for the road I took, when the weather is fine, I almost always take that road on my way to Froben's garden, because the alternative is rather narrow and has a bad smell. So even if no one had been in the vicinity, I would have taken that route. I did not realize that you were coming towards me, but my servant informed me. I would have changed direction to meet you, but several people, unknown to me, were with you, and I did not want to disrupt the company.[7] I said so to my servant at the time. So much for the suspicion.

If there is anything else, I shall be in Froben's garden[8] today roughly between four and six, if you would care to join me; one other person will be with me. Or if you prefer another day, I shall be glad to talk with you.

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2 It had just appeared in March; see Ep 2121 n4.
3 Ep 1832; he is called Cannius in the colloquy.
4 Cf Ep 2196:83–8, where Erasmus repeats what he says here and then reports, in lines 89–95, that Oecolampadius had accepted the explanation with good grace. All the same, Erasmus' embarrassment at the perception that he had intended to ridicule Oecolampadius led him to delete from the next printing of the *Colloquies* (September 1529) the reference to 'a long nose.' See CWE 40 865:22–4 with n15 (pages 872–3).
5 Felix Rex, also known as Polyphemus (Ep 2130), is the other character in the colloquy.
6 See Ep 2121 n4.
7 Cf Ep 2196:75–83.
8 Ep 2141:22

In the book that you wrote in response to Willibald, you cite me as saying that your views on the Eucharist are superior by far.[9] Perhaps Hans the Dane reported this to you,[10] but he was wrong. I said that your views were simpler and more comprehensible in that they involved fewer knotty problems.[11] But if I could persuade myself that your views were superior to the received doctrine so that I could hold that conviction with an easy conscience, I would be professing what you profess at this very moment.[12] This would be my way of getting back at intemperate monks and theologians like Béda.[13] But as things now stand, I make the only choice I can, and I work for a happier issue out of our present troubles. Farewell.

We can discuss other matters, if you like, when we meet.

2148 / From Antoine Bercin Besançon, 12 April 1529

The manuscript of this letter, which was first published as Ep 106 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It is Bercin's reply to Ep 2138. The translation makes no attempt to disguise the fact that Bercin's composition consists of a series of vague clichés, clumsily strung together without much attention to sense or grammar.

Greetings. Dear sir, greatest of scholars, I received the letter and the little book which, with your characteristic generosity, you were kind enough to

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9 Oecolampadius had recently (1526 and 1527) published two responses to pamphlets in which Pirckheimer attacked his view of the Eucharist; see Ernst Staehelin *Das theologische Lebenswerk Johannes Oekolampads* Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 21 (Leipzig 1933; repr New York / London 1971) 301–7. In neither one does he advance the claim here attributed to him, but Erasmus otherwise had ample evidence that Oecolampadius and like-minded colleagues took the view that he secretly agreed with them on this topic. See, for example, his comments to Conradus Pellicanus in Ep 1637:13–29. For the extent to which Erasmus did indeed agree with them, see Ep 2175:24–9, and cf John B. Payne's introductory note to the *Detectio praestigiarum* CWE 78 148–62.

10 Hans Bogbinder (Ep 1883), who often carried letters for Erasmus

11 Cf Ep 1637:32–3: 'My comment on your position at that time was that it was too simple; all the complex puzzles of theology could be evaded if Christians could dissent from anything which had been established on the authority of councils and supported by every church and nation throughout the centuries.'

12 Cf Epp 1717:60–5 with n24, 2175:23–9.

13 Ep 2082 n56

send me.[1] As a man who pays attention to the rules of praise and virtue, I regard you as worthy of the highest praise. Rejecting leisure as a vice that leads to utter ruin, I count as the children of virtue those who reflect on the blessed Scriptures, which they have got by memory through great and arduous study in the past. I have recognized you, not just in the past few days but for a long time now, as belonging to that number. From your letter I can readily appreciate how far you surpass in vigour of mind those who languish in idle ease. Men like that are worthless and disgusting; like beasts of the wild they abandon themselves all too easily to idleness, neglect, and sloth. Such people maintain they were born for enjoyment, not employment.[2] They reveal themselves as the bitter foes of virtue, for a slave of idleness cannot be a child of virtue, as being something antithetical to industry and application. For the book you sent me (let me not be accused of ingratitude) I give you my heartfelt thanks; and I want you to realize and to keep in mind that nothing could please me more than to be able to comply with your wishes and commands (in so far as this is possible and within my power) and to please you. I hope you will agree to count me always among your friends.

Farewell, prince among men. May the Most High grant all your prayers.

From Besançon, 12 April 1529

Your friend, who is at your service wherever he can, Antoine Bercin, canon and scholaster of Besançon

To Erasmus of Rotterdam, the first for eloquence in this age and his revered master

2149 / To Ludwig Baer

Basel, 13 April 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this letter was written on the day of Erasmus' departure from Basel to settle in Freiburg.

By 2 March Erasmus had sent someone to Freiburg to examine the house that had been offered to him there (Ep 2112:13–17). His decision to leave Basel before Easter, 28 March, was frustrated by a severe cold that lasted from 15 March until the end of the month (Ep 2125 n3). Then he decided to await the return of Hieronymus Froben from the Frankfurt book fair (sometime

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2148

1 Cf line 15 below. Possibly *De vidua christiana* with the appended Lactantius (Epp 2100, 2103).

2 This punning distinction between *otium* (leisure) and *negotium* (business) goes back at least as far as Cicero.

between 1 and 10 April; see Ep 2112 n9), thinking that the presence of his friend would make things easier for him (Ep 2136:13–17). By the end of March he had sent most of his valuables on ahead of him (Epp 2136:18–20, 2145:30–1). On about 10 April, Oecolampadius tried in vain to dissuade him from leaving (Epp 2158:54–61, 2196:90–9). At noon on 13 April, he set forth (Epp 2188:6–7, Allen Ep 2328:20–2). For detailed narratives, see Epp 2158, 2196, 2328. The exact date of Erasmus' arrival in Freiburg is not known, but his first letter from there (Ep 2150) is dated 21 April.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO LUDWIG BAER, GREETING

You were wise to fly away earlier.[1] Every time I plan to take wing and leave the nest, some obstacle arises that compels me to put off my departure.

A strange thing happened here, but whether it calls for the laughter of Democritus or the tears of Heraclitus is for you to judge.[2] A certain holy man arrived in the city.[3] As soon as he had paid the small sum he owed his landlord, he said 'I hope you are well. Repent!' Then he went out and assumed his role as a second Forerunner,[4] with a serious look on his face and crying out in a loud, clear voice: 'Repent, repent, repent; the hand of the Lord threatens you.'[5] He walked up and down the streets of the city with this message. He entered the cathedral and began a thunderous denunciation of the corrupt life of the canons. Many laughed at that, others took no notice. Finally, it is said, he entered the churches of the Oecolampadians and cried out against them with unrestrained fury, calling them again and again 'destroyers of souls.' Someone interrupted him: 'Look here,' he said, 'you are calling us to repentance; tell us what you think we ought to do and how we can placate God.' Then, as though inspired by some power, he fixed his questioner with a Gorgon stare and said, 'You Pharisee, why are you tempting me? The Spirit has not instructed me to say anything more.'

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2149

1 Baer had left Basel about three months earlier; see Ep 2087.

2 Democritus and Heraclitus were two fifth-century Greek philosophers. In later antiquity Democritus gained the nickname of 'the laughing philosopher,' perhaps because of his ethical ideas about well-being and contentment. By contrast Heraclitus was 'the weeping philosopher.' Neither term was particularly apt.

3 Evidently an itinerant Anabaptist preacher; see line 37 below.

4 Ie as a second John the Baptist

5 This is not precisely the message of John the Baptist as recorded in the Bible: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand' (Matt 3:2).

It is said that he played the part of the Forerunner also at Montbéliard. Since in that town too he could find no one willing to repent, he himself, shut up in jail for three months, did penance for everyone. When he was released from there, he followed the teaching of the gospel and 'shook the dust from off his feet,'[6] and moved here. But since the word 'repentance' is even less popular here, he was ordered to be thrown into prison. On his way there he shouted out, unabashed, 'Repent.' One of the guards said, 'Unless you keep quiet, you impudent fool, I'll land my fist on your face.' But he shouted even louder 'Repent!' What happened in prison is not known for certain. It is generally believed that he was released on condition that he not show up again within the jurisdiction of this commonwealth.[7]

Soon, we hear, he took himself off to Luzern, a city that is more strongly opposed to the new sects than any other. There for several days he performed the duties of a Forerunner. He had this also in common with John the Baptist, that he too was thrown into prison. But there was one difference: John was beheaded, while he was burned at the stake – presumably because an Anabaptist makes a poor representation of the Baptist. This sect is more hated by the princes than any of the rest because, it is said, they preach anarchy and the sharing of property. But they have no church anywhere, they are not interested in exercising sovereignty, and they do not use force to defend themselves. It is said that among them are many who lead much purer lives than the others do. But what purity can there be if the integrity of the faith is destroyed? If we hear a raven croaking on the left, we are worried and think that some disaster is imminent;[8] and yet we all laugh at the voice of a man. For some years now we have witnessed every imaginable evil: banishments, riots, wars, slaughter, plague, famine, revolution. Has anyone tried to become even a fraction better? We have hardened ourselves against God's lash; we have hardened ourselves against his remedies. What remains but the ultimate calamity of a flood? I only hope that things will turn out better for us all than I imagine!

I am busy getting ready for the move. It involves me in great expense, though more worrying is the threat to my health. But I have decided on exile; the die must be cast.[9] Farewell.

Basel, 13 April 1529

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6 Matt 10:14; Mark 6:11; Luke 9:5

7 Ie the city-state (*respublica*) of Basel; cf Ep 2145 n11.

8 This expression is not found in the *Adagia*. But the idea that a croaking raven is a bad omen is fairly common in Latin literature. See eg Cicero *De divinatione* 1.85; Plautus *Aulularia* 624; Virgil *Eclogues* 9.15.

9 *Adagia* I iv 32

2150 / To Hieronymus Ricius Freiburg, 21 April 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2131. It is also the first extant letter sent from Freiburg.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIERONYMUS RICIUS, GREETING

When you praise me immoderately, I can readily forgive you for it and attribute it to your affection for me, which seems to me quite extravagant. When you devalue yourself far beneath your real merits, my dear Ricius, I cannot help being impressed by your exceptional modesty. There is no reason for you to praise my courtesy and kindness, since it would be the height of discourtesy if I did not welcome a learned man like you, who in a letter calls for my friendship. I do not count myself among the learned, but I have always loved and venerated those who are blessed with great learning, especially if they have the additional commendation of generosity and honesty. That you possess both these qualities is evident in your letter. Farewell.

Freiburg, 21 April 1529

2151 / To Bonifacius Amerbach Freiburg, 25 April 1529

This letter (= AK Ep 1349) was first published in the *Epistolae familiares*. The autograph is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS AN III 15 4). Bonifacius' reply is Ep 2152.

Cordial greetings. My little move turned out much better than I had expected. Not only did it not damage my health, it even improved it.[1] I conclude from this that an even longer journey would have been beneficial. If only things were peaceful! I like this well-mannered city; I hear no one speaking ill of another.

I shall always have a soft spot for Basel, whose hospitality I enjoyed for so many years, and where in return I did not behave, unless I am mistaken, as a particularly disagreeable guest. I forgot (shameless creature that I am) to pay the bill at the inn for me and my companions;[2] and then I forgot to pay

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2151

1 In the wake of his move to Freiburg, Erasmus' customary complaints of old age and its infirmities gave way to reports that both the journey itself and the climate in Freiburg had proved beneficial to his health; see Epp 2161:334, 2173:29–31, 2174:10–11, 2188:10–11, 2191:77–81, 2193:21–2, 2196:7–8, 2201:62–3, and cf Allen Ep 2275:21–34.

2 Probably at Neuenburg am Rhein, where he landed; see Ep 2196:108–10.

for the journey and for your horse.[3] It had slipped my mind through anxiety over settling my household. But I am indebted to you on innumerable other counts: some day I must begin to pay down my debt.

The housekeeper's box has not yet arrived.[4] There are three sugar cones in it, which I bought for over three florins. I wonder what is causing the delay. Sniff around and see what the Crab is doing there;[5] and whenever you find a reliable man, send me a letter and let me know anything that is happening in Basel that I ought to know. In return, I shall see that you are not in the dark about any new developments here. My best wishes to you and your wife,[6] and basilical greetings to Basilius.[7]

Freiburg, 25 April 1529

Your friend Erasmus of Rotterdam

To the honourable Doctor Bonifacius Amerbach. In Basel

2152 / From Bonifacius Amerbach Basel, 1 May 1529

This letter (= AK Ep 1351) was first published by Allen from the autograph rough draft in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS C VIa 73 63). It is Bonifacius' reply to Ep 2151. Erasmus in turn would reply with Ep 2155.

Greetings. I am delighted that your journey was so successful. But I am sorry you have concluded that a longer distance from here would be beneficial. When you could no longer stay here without loss of respect, I hoped that at least you would not go far, so that from time to time I might enjoy your learned companionship. But since this may not perhaps be to your advantage, I shall seek comfort in your erudite and immortal writings to compensate for the loss I shall feel by your plan to move further away.

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3 This seems to suggest that Bonifacius, who had accompanied Erasmus on the boat (Ep 2196:29–30) had ridden on with him to Freiburg.

4 For the housekeeper, see Ep 2202 n4. For her box, see Epp 2152:22, 2155:1, 2158:77–8.

5 The Crab, ie Ludovicus Carinus (Ep 2111 n2), had apparently paid a brief visit to Basel before going on to his canonry at Beromünster; see Ep 2152:20–1.

6 Bonifacius married Martha Fuchs of Neuenburg in 1527. Their happy marriage produced five children and lasted until her death from the plague in 1541.

7 Here the obsolete English word 'basilical,' meaning 'kingly' or 'royal' captures Erasmus' pun (using the Greek word *basilikôs*) on the name of Bonifacius' older brother Basilius.

These works bring you before our eyes and show us a living image of yourself.

The kindly sentiments that you will always have for Basel are evidence of a singular generosity and an unusual fairness of mind. For myself, I only ask of my ungrateful city that it begin to recognize at the earliest moment how much it owes to Erasmus, under whose auspices it has become known all over the world. But, my dear Erasmus, do you really owe me anything? For you have honoured me so generously with every courtesy, putting me heavily in your debt. By no transfer of material goods could I repay even a thousandth part of the debt I owe you for what you have done for me. So how could I, who am your debtor, demand even a cent for the little services I have done you?

From what I hear, the Crab set off for Beromünster the day after you left. He has a canonry there as a reward for his cultivation of the Holy See.[1] As for the delivery of your housekeeper's box,[2] that ruffian of a carrier has cheated us. He dallied day after day because of some problem or other with the baggage, and although we were in a hurry, we waited.

There is no news here that it would be important for you to know, although every hour something new happens in Basel; in this respect Basel is a match for Africa.[3] I would tell you such news as we have, if it were the sort of report you would have time to listen to or I to write about. Pellicanus came here,[4] intending, I think, to visit the church in Basel in the name of the Lord.

If there is any way, dear Erasmus, in which I can oblige you, you have long known how ready I am to help. To put the matter in a word, whatever

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2152

1 Cf Ep 2151 n5. It was a canonry at the collegiate church of St Michael at Beromünster in the Aargau; see Ep 2085 n3.

2 See Ep 2151:13.

3 Africa was traditionally thought to be a land of novelties and wonders; see *Adagia* III vii 10, and cf Epp 1756:3–5, 2157:178–9.

4 Conradus Pellicanus (Ep 1637 introduction) had helped Erasmus with his edition of Jerome (1516) as well as some of his other patristic editions and become his friend. In 1523, when Pellicanus and Oecolampadius were appointed professors of theology at Basel, relations between Pellicanus and Erasmus were still good despite the former's obvious sympathies for the Reformation. In 1525, however, reports that Pellicanus had claimed that Erasmus privately shared his Sacramentarian views on the Eucharist caused a painful break in relations that was not healed until shortly before Erasmus' death. Meanwhile, in 1526 Pellicanus moved to Zürich, where he taught Greek and Hebrew and made a major contribution to the Zürich translation of the Bible.

merit my little services have, I can honestly say that they will always be no more than I owe you. Farewell, Erasmus, my distinguished friend and prince of letters. Basilius[5] and my wife[6] send their greetings.

Basel, 1 May 1529

Your friend, Bonfacius Amerbach

My greetings to our dear Glareanus.[7]

To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, who adds lustre to every branch of learning, my matchless benefactor. In Freiburg

2153 / From Bartholomäus Welser Augsburg, 3 May 1529

The manuscript of this letter, which was first published as Ep 107 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

Bartholomäus Welser (1484–1561) was, together with his brother Anton, head of the great Augsburg merchant-banking firm that had been founded by their father Anton (d 1518) and had close business connections with the royal court of Spain. Although Bartholomäus was a patron of scholars, his relations with Erasmus appear to have been limited to assisting him with financial transactions.

Greetings in Christ our Saviour. Distinguished and most respected sir, I received your Reverence's letter of 6 April,[1] to which I would have replied earlier, if couriers heading for Basel had been available before this. With regard to the copies of the quittance,[2] we are not asking for a new formula, but for the one that is recognized in Spain. They have their own formulae in those kingdoms, which we are required to use in answering claims.[3] We make no profit from this exchange, nor do we have any other aim than to oblige your Reverence. So we have arranged that a sum, calculated at the rate of 88 German kreuzers per ducat, be paid to your Reverence, that is a

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5 Bonifacius' older brother
6 Martha Fuchs (Ep 2151 n6)
7 Ep 2098 n1

2153
1 Duplicate of an earlier letter that is not extant; see Ep 2126:233–4.
2 The Latin is *syngraphas quietanciarias*. Cf Epp 2109 n9, 2126:231–2.
3 Given that Erasmus was exchanging 200 ducats (see line 13 below) received from Spain, it is clear that this was Fonseca's gift to him; see Epp 2003:94–5, 2004:38–41, 2109:27–8, 2126:183–4, 2198:35–6.

total of 209 crowns *au soleil* of good gold and of the standard weight plus 44 kreuzers (a crown having the value of 84 kreuzers).[4]

We have appointed three agents in Basel; any of them will deal with your Reverence's claim concerning the 200 ducats at the value set out above, after you have handed over three copies of the quittance, signed in your Reverence's hand and stamped with your seal. Our agents are Wolfgang Filser,[5] Verena zur Meerkatzen,[6] and Franz Baer.[7] From one of them your Reverence will be able to get the aforementioned sum according to the procedure already described. It is our wish to do all that lies within our power to please you.

My relative by marriage, Doctor Konrad Peutinger,[8] to whom, in an earlier letter,[9] your Reverence asked me to convey your greetings, not only thanks you but promises faithfully that he will always be mindful of his

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4 The exchange rates given here confirm the calculation of the value of the 200 ducats made in Ep 2003 n6. The ducats are actual gold coins, most likely Venetian ducats, which were supposed to contain 3.559 g fine gold, while French 'crowns,' ie *écus à la couronne au soleil*, were supposed to contain 3.296 g fine gold. By this measure, 1 ducat = 1.080 French 'crowns.' But, by the reckoning used here, 200 ducats = 209 'crowns' plus 44 kreuzers, with 84 kreuzers per 'crown' (that is, 200 ducats = 209.524 'crowns'), 1 ducat = 1.0478 'crowns.' A slightly different comparison can be made in terms of Rhenish florins, which were then supposed to contain 2.527 g fine gold, so that 1 'crown' = 1.304 Rhenish florins. By the exchange rates indicated here (84 kreuzers per 'crown' and 60 kreuzers per Rhenish florin), 1 'crown' was worth 1,400 florins, a ratio that is confirmed by the current English values of 56d sterling for the 'crown' and 40d for the Rhenish florin. The current English market value of the ducat was the same as that given to the French crown: 56d, further indicating that the slight difference in the gold content ratios was commercially unimportant. A sum of 200 ducats would thus have been worth £46 13s 4d, the equivalent of 1,866.67 days' wages for a Cambridge master mason (at 6d per day). See CWE 14 476 Table 3, CWE 1 314 and 316, CWE 12 650 Table 3D.

5 Filser (documented 1517–40) was a merchant at Basel and a member of the 'Schlüssel' guild.

6 The text calls her Verena de Catomarino. Apart from this letter, she appears in the historical record only in a sales contract of 15 October 1526 as the holder of a mortgage that the city of Basel had to pay off when it acquired the village of Biel-Benken.

7 Franz (I) Baer (1479–1543), was the elder half-brother of Ludwig Baer. A clothier by profession, he was an active member of the city council from 1522. Because of his firm adherence to the Catholic party, he lost his seat on the council in February 1529 and, like his brother, moved to Freiburg.

8 Ep 318:3n

9 See n1 above.

gratitude. Since the Frankfurt fair he has had your *Widow*[10] and also the *Feverish Critic*.[11] He is assiduous in reading them, which he does with great delight. He returns your greetings and commends himself to your Reverence, his benefactor.

3 May in the year of our salvation 1529

Bartholmäus Welser and company at Augsburg

To the venerable and illustrious Master Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, his much respected mentor

2154 / From Emilio de' Migli Brescia, 4 May 1529

The autograph of this letter, which was first published as Ep 108 in Förstemann/Günther, was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). It was first printed in Migli's Italian edition of the *Enchiridion*, but with many variations, some of which were evidently motivated by caution. Allen's text is that of the manuscript, the letter actually received by Erasmus, with the variations noted in the apparatus.

A native of Brescia who became chancellor of that city in 1529, Emilio de' Migli (c 1480–1531) is best known for his translation into Italian of Erasmus' *Enchiridion*, which is the subject of this letter and of Erasmus' reply to it, Ep 2165.

Some people here have been proclaiming for a long time that you are dead.[1] I am thinking of Franciscans and Dominicans, who persist in asserting that they have the news from a reliable source in Germany. But they have been wrong about this so often that I am not inclined to trust them any longer. I think they are driven by some malicious impulse to hope the story is true, for men are generally ready to believe what they desire. But if you had really departed this life, the Christian community, indeed the whole world, would be resounding with endless reports, or rather it would be flooded with tears. So I have decided to send this letter to you, since I have a reliable

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10 *De vidua christiana* (Ep 2100)

11 The reference is doubtless to Erasmus' reply to Carvajal: *Responsio adversus febricitantis cuiusdam libellum* 'Reply to a Little Book by a Feverish Critic.' See Ep 2110 n10.

2154

1 Cf Ep 2144 n1.

messenger, Vincenzo Maggi,[2] a man free of superstition, but a great devotee of gospel freedom and gospel piety.

I have no doubt this letter will get into your hands. About four months ago I sent you another letter,[3] in which I informed you that I had worked as conscientiously as I could on a translation into Italian of your *Handbook of the Christian Soldier*, a work of pure gold.[4] I wanted to provide something that would be useful even for those who do not know Latin. From time to time, when the situation permitted, I have devoted myself to work in the vernacular, which is now flourishing in Italy, thanks to the support particularly of Pietro Bembo, who has established rules for that language.[5] Now your *Little Dagger*[6] is in everyone's hands. I am being pressed by friends, monks, many preachers, and some women to have it printed. But I thought I should not do so without first informing you and hearing your reaction to my proposal.

In my earlier letter I begged you, out of your Christian charity, to be good enough to steal a few moments from your busy life to jot down three or four lines about the translation if you liked what I had done. I now make the same request, if I may do so without presumption; for it would be the height of impudence, not prudence, to summon a man who is always busy on important work to leave his serious writings and evangelical labours and examine my trifling efforts.

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2 Vincenzo Maggi of Brescia (documented 1520–63) studied philosophy at the University of Padua and then, after the journey to the north on which he carried this letter to Erasmus, taught philosophy at Padua, where in 1533 Viglius Zuichemus delivered to him a letter (now lost) from Erasmus (Allen Ep 2854:115). Maggi was much esteemed as a teacher and as an authority on Aristotle. In 1542 he moved to Ferrara to become tutor to the sons of Ercole II d'Este. It appears that by 1563 he had returned to Brescia.

3 Not extant

4 Published at Brescia (Lodovico Britannico) on 22 April 1531: *Enchiridion di Erasmo Roterodamo dalla lingua latina nella volgare tradotto per M. Emilio di Emilii Bresciano*

5 In his *Prose della volgar lingua* (1525), Bembo (Ep 2106 introduction) established Petrarch as the model for Italian poetic diction and Boccaccio for prose.

6 The Greek word *enchiridion*, meaning literally 'something in the hand,' was used both for 'a little dagger' (which Migli here puts into Latin as *Pugiunculus*) and for 'a handbook.' Erasmus chose *Enchiridion* as the title of his 'handbook' because he wanted it to be a 'handy weapon' for the Christian soldier in contrast to the ponderous tomes of the scholastic theologians (see CWE 66 9–10).

I shall not detain you with eulogies of the *Enchiridion*; for what good would it do for an inarticulate stammerer like me to shout his praises of Erasmus' mighty legacy? Is it not likely that my nattering might dim the splendour of your name? This only I want to say: Christendom has its Origen, its Jerome, its Augustine, its Chrysostom, and all those other heroes of scholarship and piety. Now it has its Erasmus too. My prayer is that, for the benefit of Christendom, he may live as long as Nestor,[7] unless he himself, after enduring so many labours, wishes to fade away and be with Christ. Farewell.

Brescia, 4 May 1529
Emilio de' Migli of Brescia, your most devoted admirer
To Erasmus of Rotterdam, a man richly blessed

2155 / To Bonifacius Amerbach

Freiburg, 5 May 1529

This letter (= AK Ep 1352), is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2152. It was first published in the *Epistolae familiares*. The autograph is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS AN III 15 5).

Greetings. I have finally received the box and a letter from you, which was sweeter to me than any kind of sugar,[1] dear Bonifacius. I have no time to write more at present, since the courier is in a hurry. I live here in body, but I am with you in spirit. Best wishes to you and yours, my incomparable friend. Yesterday I wrote to Hieronymus Froben.[2]

Freiburg, 5 May 1529
There is no need to add my name.
To Doctor Amerbach. In Basel

2156 / To Johannes Brisgoicus

[Freiburg], 6 May 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Johannes Brisigoicus (d 1539) was a native of Broggingen near Freiburg in the Breisgau. After studies at Freiburg and Paris, he returned to Freiburg,

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7 See Ep 2130 n40.

2155
1 Cf Ep 2151:13.
2 The letter is not extant.

where in 1503 he took his doctorate in theology and joined the faculty of theology, receiving a chair in 1504. Although he never published anything, he was esteemed as a leading academic, serving twenty-one terms as dean of the faculty and five as rector of the university.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANNES BRISGOICUS, DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY, GREETING

It is a mark of your exceptional kindness that you are opening your garden to me,[1] so that from time to time I may refresh my mind and body when they are exhausted by work and worry. To show my gratitude I am opening my garden to you, so that you can take pleasure in it whenever you feel like turning from serious studies to the delights of literature. I shall enjoy your garden, making sure that I do not harm it even the least little bit, for I shall simply feast my eyes on it. In my garden you may pick whatever you wish, for it is better than yours in this respect, that it is no less green in the winter months than in the summer – if, that is, it can be said to bear any fine or lovely fruit at all. I suspect you do not have this edition, which is much fuller than the previous ones.[2] I should prefer to send you something more attractive, if I knew what you would rather have. Best wishes.

From my study, 6 May 1529

2157 / To Alonso de Fonseca Freiburg, [May] 1529

This is the preface to the ten-volume Froben edition of the *Opera omnia* of St Augustine. A manuscript copy of the preface, made for the use of the typesetter and showing frequent corrections in Erasmus' hand, is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS Frey-Grynaeus II 9 133). Only after doubts about Fonseca's attitude towards him had proved to be groundless did Erasmus finally decide that it was appropriate to act on his long-established desire to dedicate the edition to him; see Ep 2126:192–6.

For Erasmus' progress on Augustine to 1523, see Epp 1309 introduction, 1341A:1417–43. For the next few years, preparation of the edition was repeatedly interrupted by work on other projects, among them the revised edition

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2156

1 As Froben had done in Basel; see Ep 1756 n2.

2 *multo superioribus locupletiorem*; perhaps, as Allen suggests, the September 1528 edition of the *Adagia*, which is described on its title-page as more copious than its predecessors (*nec parum copioso locupletatum auctario*)

of St Jerome (Ep 1465), a variety of works by St John Chrysostom (Epp 1558, 1563, 1661, 1733, 1800–1), and an edition of St Ambrose (Ep 1855). But work on Augustine never entirely ceased (see eg Ep 1547), and by early 1527 Erasmus was once again diligently searching for manuscripts and receiving help from Conradus Goclenius and others (Epp 1758:8–10, 1778:22–6; cf Epp 1890, 1899). By the autumn of 1527, the printing of the earliest volumes was already under way (Ep 1889:19). Work continued all through 1528, with Erasmus complaining about the immensity of the task and the terrible state of the manuscripts, as well as about being compelled to work simultaneously on the revised Seneca (Ep 2091); see Epp 1893, 1910, 1911, 1921, 2033, 2038, 2041, 2046, 2049. Erasmus' attempts to procure a royal privilege for the printers from Francis I were in vain (Epp 2053, 2075, 2291), but the title-page of the first volume indicates that he was successful in his attempt to secure an imperial privilege from Charles V (Ep 2126:243–4). Strikes by workmen delayed the printing for a time (Epp 2133:54–5, 2134:50–1), but on 1 April 1529, the end was in view (Ep 2139:20–1), and on 8 June Erasmus was able to announce that the Augustine was finished (Ep 2175:4–5). By 8 September, presentation copies were ready for distribution (Ep 2215).

Allen set the month-date of the preface at May because in a letter written from Bruges on 30 August 1529 (Ep 2208), in answer to one (no longer extant) from Erasmus in Freiburg, Juan Luis Vives indicates that Erasmus had informed him of the favourable reference to him in the preface to Augustine (cf lines 543–7). Since Ep 2159, written on 9 May, had been carried to Antwerp by 'a Bruges schoolmaster,' Allen conjectured that the letter to Vives was sent off at the same time, which means that the preface to Augustine must have been written a bit earlier.

Another edition of Augustine was published by Claude Chevallon at Paris in 1531. The general preface to the edition, written by Jakob Haemer of Stuttgart and dated 17 October 1531, states that four years previously, probably at learning of the death of Johann Froben, Chevallon had attempted to enlist Erasmus as chief editor of a new Augustine, but that Erasmus turned him down on the ground that he was bound in honour to the edition being prepared by Froben's heirs. (There is no trace of this negotiation with Chevallon in Erasmus' surviving correspondence.) Chevallon thereupon waited until the Froben edition appeared and then used it as the basis for his own edition, which included revisions based on manuscripts lent by the abbot of St Victor at Paris; see Allen's introductions for Epp 1309, 2157. The most obvious difference between the Chevallon and Froben editions was that Froben printed *De civitate Dei* in 492 pages of plain text, without Vives' notes, while Chevallon reproduced Vives' 1522 edition in 810 copiously annotated pages; see Ep 1309 introduction.

TO THE RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN CHRIST AND ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE ALONSO DE FONSECA, ARCHBISHOP OF TOLEDO, PRIMATE OF ALL SPAIN, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Your Grace, most eminent of prelates, here for you to take into your arms is that invincible champion and incomparable Doctor of the church, St Aurelius Augustinus, now complete and published in a special edition, for I know you are fonder of Augustine (and rightly so) than of all the others and have always regarded him as your particular favourite. Does the Christian world possess anything more aureate or more august than this writer?[1] Indeed, it looks as though even his names were given him not by chance but by the prescience of the Spirit. Nothing is more precious than the gold of wisdom or more wonderful than the brilliance of eloquence when united with wisdom. Different people have different talents, as the Spirit, the giver of gifts, decides, who in his good judgment assigns to each man his share according to the measure of his faith. In Athanasius we admire the serious and painstaking clarity of his teaching. In Basil we venerate, in addition to his subtlety, the pious and gentle sweetness of his language. In his friend Chrysostom we are attracted by the spontaneous flow of his eloquence. We worship in Cyprian the spirit that befits a martyr. In Hilary we marvel at the grandeur of his language, which matches the grandeur of his theme, with a touch, so to speak, of the buskin.[2] In Ambrose we love his delightful little jabs and the modesty that is proper to a bishop. In Jerome we appreciate the rich storehouse of the Scriptures. We recognize in Gregory a genuine holiness, uncoloured by pretence. And not to go on at tedious length, all the others, through the benevolence of that same Spirit, have their own virtues, by which they commend themselves in their various ways to the affections of the pious. But I do not think there is another Doctor whom that rich and generous Spirit has endowed so abundantly with all his gifts as Augustine. It is as though he wanted to paint on a single canvas a picture of the model bishop, complete with all the qualities that Peter and Paul, following Christ, the prince of bishops, demand of those who undertake to feed the Lord's flock.[3]

We do not generally hold against a man the kind of life he led before he was reborn at the holy font, yet in the case of a bishop, the blessed Paul

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2157

1 Erasmus puns on the two names Aurelius and Augustinus with the related adjectives *aureus* (golden) and *augustus* (august).

2 The high boot (*cothurnus* in Latin, 'buskin' in English) worn by the tragic actor in ancient Greek drama came to symbolize the tragic manner.

3 1 Tim 3:1–7; 1 Peter 5:1–9

demanded that he be approved on the evidence of those who are outside the fold.[4] What kind of a man was St Augustine? Even when he was outside the fold, he could be recognized as a good man by those inside, at least by the standards of his own milieu. As a young man he had a concubine, something that the laws of men permit. He did not repudiate her, but when she was stolen from him, he took another. With both of these women he observed a conjugal fidelity. It would not be easy to find such decency today among our priests and abbots. He was lured into the sect of the Manichaeans, the most pernicious group of men that the world has seen.[5] These people, by false claims, prodigious fasts, feigned poverty, a sham continence, and other monstrous and draconian regulations – to say nothing of the fantastic myths that they tricked out with the false allure of philosophy – cast such a cloud of deception over men's minds that even the elect could be deceived.

The young Augustine fell under the spell of these buffoons when he was not yet baptized or a catechumen but was searching, amid all the illusions of reality, for the truth, which he loved as something glimpsed in a dream. His desires were holy, his error human and naive. He was not tainted, however, by the vices of the Manichaeans, nor did he cling long to their impious doctrine. Perhaps this is why the Lord allowed him to slip for a while – that he might more effectively keep others away from this fatal error or bring them back. After his period as a catechumen he immediately embarked upon a way of life according to the rule of Christ, and he continued to follow that path, always making steady progress towards better things, so that if heretics made any charge against him, it would not stick; and those who dared to make the attempt gained nothing but a reputation for impudence.

So much we learn from the record. As for the praise he earned for his moderation, although he suffered from delicate health – indeed men with special gifts are rarely blessed with strong bodies, for Nature takes from the strength of the body what she has added to that of the mind – his table had as a rule only greens and legumes, with on occasion the addition

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4 1 Tim 3:7

5 Manichaeism was a dualistic religion that combined a Persian Zoroastrian concept of God with Christian elements. Manichaeans posited an eternal struggle between light and darkness, the former identified with spirit and good and the latter identified with matter and evil. The sect spread rapidly in the Roman Empire and was popular in fourth-century North Africa, where Augustine encountered it (cf Epp 1451 n8, 1738 n59, 2002 n12). See Brown *Augustine* chapter 5.

of a little meat, and that was done out of consideration for his guests or for those with weaker constitutions. So you see his zeal for moderation was combined with compassion. He drank wine, but after the fashion of Timothy, who followed Paul's advice.[6] He bound no one by hard and fast rules, but encouraged the stronger by his example while being understanding and indulgent towards the weaker – though only in those matters that do not of themselves define the good and the wicked man. One can readily appreciate that this was no pharisaical righteousness, but a truly Christian piety, seasoned and tempered with sensitivity and kindness.

This is the kind of sobriety that the Apostle seeks first and foremost in a bishop, and hand in hand with sobriety goes vigilance.[7] This admirable quality too you can find in Augustine, and to a high degree. He devoted the whole day to prayer, the sacrifice of the mass, teaching, disputations, hearing cases, settling conflicts, and refuting heretics; and he snatched a good part of the night for his sacred studies. In this way he managed not just to perform the duties of his own church but to help other churches as well, either by preaching in person or, when he could not be present, by sending a written communication to advise, teach, instruct, confirm.

Joined to sobriety and vigilance is chastity, which is the particular glory and adornment of a bishop. Augustine was so careful about this that he would not share his home with his sister, although she was dedicated to God, or with any close female relation, and he very rarely visited those communities of women that he had established. He refused absolutely to converse with a woman without clerics or matrons being present, unless there was some confidential matter that could be entrusted only to the ears of a single person. In this case his charity taught him to despise the whisperings of malice, for he did not believe in being so in thrall to wicked tongues as to neglect a necessary duty on that account. But when necessity did not press, he returned to his usual caution, not because he feared for himself, but he judged it of little account for a bishop to be a man of unsoiled chastity if he did not also have an unblemished reputation. Moreover, he was not satisfied to preserve his own reputation untouched by scandal unless his clergy also had a good name.

He kept his tongue so completely free of insolence that even when engaged in controversy with the most dogmatic heretics, either in his written works or face to face, he showed remarkable control in avoiding abusive language. His defence of the truth rested solely on the basis and evidence

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6 To drink a bit of wine 'for your stomach's sake'; 1 Tim 5:23
7 1 Tim 3:2–3

of Scripture. False doctrine is rebutted, but always without returning an insult, even when provoked. He showed the same moderation in chastising the behaviour of the wicked, preferring to cure by gentle means rather than to make things worse by severity. So when in a letter he urged an African bishop, an Italian by birth, to induce his people to abandon their traditional drunkenness and to challenge them to follow the Italian example of sobriety, Augustine impressed upon him that it was not advisable to resort to angry tirades, but to use gentle persuasion so as to cure this chronic illness gradually. This is what Paul means when he says a bishop should not be πλήκτης 'a brawler,' in the sense in which the Greek commentators, followed by Jerome, understand that word. Otherwise, what would be the point of praising a bishop because he was not a thug [*percussor*],[8] that is, for not killing or wounding anyone with a sword or striking him with the palm of his hand?

As I have said, he kept a very frugal table, which, however, was always open to guests, and enriched more by profitable conversation than fine food. Over it was suspended a sort of house rule in the form of a couplet expressing disapproval of abusive language and malicious gossip about other people behind their backs. This is often the peculiar weakness of those who in other respects lead a pious life, though there is nothing more alien to true piety than this; for it is a scourge that creeps up silently in the cloak of virtue, masquerading as a hatred of evil and a passion for the good. The virtuous Augustine was so disgusted by this abomination that sometimes he would not defer even to the authority of bishops but threatened to leave the table if they did not refrain from gossip of this sort. It was for this reason that he generally read a sacred text at table or discussed some useful subject so that the minds of the diners would be refreshed no less than their bodies.

The Apostle wants a bishop to be ἄμαχος 'unwarlike' and μὴ αἰσχροκερδής 'not a moneygrubber,'[9] that is, he should not be pugnacious or quarrelsome or basely devoted to personal gain. This was such a prominent characteristic of Augustine that often he abandoned a case in court in favour of his opponent, thinking it a good bargain to sacrifice property to peace

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8 The key to following Erasmus' train of thought here is that he is attacking the Latinity of the Vulgate. *Percussor*, meaning 'assassin' or 'thug,' is the word used in the Vulgate to translate the Greek πλήκτης in 1 Tim 3:3. In his annotation on the passage in question (LB VI 934E–F) Erasmus argues that the Greek term refers to verbal rather than physical abuse and cites Jerome, Chrysostom, and Ambrose to that effect.

9 1 Tim 3:3, 8

of mind. He refused many inheritances that came unsolicited to the church when he suspected that the heirs might start litigation or raise objections. To someone who had voluntarily given his property to the church and then, repenting of his generosity, asked for his gift back, Augustine restored the property and the contract, although he had right on his side and could have dismissed the shameless claimant with universal approval. Sometimes, to relieve the needs of the poor, he even sold off the sacred vessels. What is more, it is said that on several occasions he tried to transfer to the people the total emoluments of the church, leaving nothing for himself and his colleagues except what the spontaneous generosity of the people might donate from day to day. After filling the office of bishop with the greatest satisfaction for forty years or more, so far from amassing a huge fortune, he died without a will, not because he did not have the right to make one, but because he had nothing to leave. I do not mention this because I believe that bishops in our time should be forced to imitate his example, but to show how deeply averse the mind of this most holy bishop was to sordid moneygrubbing and to point out that such acquisitiveness is accompanied with the usual conflicts.

But especially in education, which is the most important function of a bishop, there was such a many-sided brilliance in him that there is no one, among either Greek or Latin writers, whom we could put alongside him in this role. He possessed incomparable mental powers, whether you consider the sharpness of his intellect, which quickly got to the bottom of the most complex issues, or the accuracy of his memory, or the indefatigable vigour of his mind. The difficulties of a problem added nourishment to his intellect. Anyone who challenged him with a problem was simply, as the saying goes, driving a horse to the plain,[10] and no subjects attracted him more than those of excruciating subtlety; nor would he rest until he had untangled all the knots. He was always ready to teach, much as a keen businessman is always ready for a profit. He also possessed a wonderfully forgiving nature, which Paul calls *μακροθυμία* 'forbearance,'[11] as well as an unruffled gentleness, which Peter calls *πραΰτης*[12] – a quality which Plato believes is not commonly found among those of a more vigorous temperament.[13] This was

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10 *Adagia* I viii 82, a proverb about urging someone to do what he does best

11 Eph 4:2, not used specifically here of bishops, but rather applied to all Christians

12 1 Peter 3:15

13 Differences of temperament are discussed by Plato in many passages; see especially *Republic* 410D and *Statesman* 306C–311.

especially evident in the many battles he fought with the heretics. Some of these people resorted to remarkable dodges to escape the weight of invincible truth, some tried to waste time with irrelevant and extraneous evasions, others attempted, by hurling insults, to turn a controversy into a quarrel, others again aimed to wear him out and upset him with the most fatuous replies while he was developing a contrary argument. None of these tricks could succeed in stopping him from making his case, by repeating, reviewing, driving home the points made on both sides of the issue; this he did with such clarity and lucidity that even the inexperienced multitude could see that there was nothing left to the heretics but their effrontery.

With such gentleness, joined with a persistent earnestness, he cured many of their heretical ideas and outargued everyone. There is an old saying that 'Africa is always producing something new.'[14] This was true also of Augustine's time, when Africa was infested with such a variety of strange heresies. Its people were neither sober nor firm in the faith, being immoderately eager for new things, though they were shrewd and cunning. Against such portentous odds, it is remarkable what a gallant fighter Augustine showed himself to be. He floored the Arian Pascentius, a formidable foe because of his influence and public position.[15] He exposed the incredible fables of the Manichaeans and brought their lurid mysteries into the light: to make these known was to destroy them. He fought many battles with the Donatists and the Circumcellions, a persistent plague, and finally won a decisive and crushing victory.[16] His last battle was with the

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14 *Adagia* III vii 10. Cf Ep 2152 n3.

15 Pascentius was a steward of imperial property (*comes domus regiae*) in Africa and an Arian (ie a denier of the true divinity of Christ) who used his influential position to make trouble for the orthodox Catholic clergy. In c 406 he challenged Augustine to a debate at Carthage in which, by all accounts except his own, he was bested by the latter's cogent arguments. The incident is recounted in chapter 17 of Possidius' *Life of St Augustine*, which Erasmus included in the first volume of his edition, and in two letters of Augustine to Pascentius (Epp 238 and 239 in modern editions).

16 The Donatists were a schismatic group that emerged in the African church early in the fourth century. Theological and moral rigorists, they regarded anyone who had submitted in any way to the Diocletianic persecutions as a traitor to the church who could not legitimately be ordained or administer the sacraments. When they allied themselves with violent bands of peasant marauders called Circumcellions, the imperial government made serious efforts at repression, culminating in their formal condemnation at Carthage in 411. The Circumcellions disappeared fairly quickly, but the Donatist schism survived until the Arabs destroyed the African church in the seventh and eighth centuries. On

Pelagians.[17] On top of all this he came close to wiping out what remained of paganism in Africa. And he achieved such great success, not by force of arms or by the use of troops, prisons, or flames, but only by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; all of his many victories and triumphs were won for the church of Christ by the weapons of the apostles. The Donatists and the Circumcellions provided the only exceptions, for since they themselves resorted to the sword, the authority of the emperor was finally invoked, though Augustine was initially against this; and soon we find him interceding to soften the imperial edict. In this he was so successful that in several cases a fine assessed in gold was returned to those who had paid it. He took pains to plead with the imperial magistrates that none of the heretics be put to death. Like a kindly doctor, he wanted all whom he could cure by his skill to survive. Indeed (and this reveals the wide reach of his clemency) he even begged for the life of those by whom some true believers had been wickedly put to death.[18]

I mentioned the forgiving nature of this most holy bishop, not to encourage the impious who divide and destroy the church of Christ by their false teaching, but to show how very gentle a Doctor of the church should be. Imperial laws do not lose their force because their severity is sometimes mitigated through the intervention of god-fearing men, especially where clear signs of repentance offer hope of an amendment of life. Nor is a law unjust that ordains the death penalty for murder because from time to time some good bishops have begged for a murderer's life to be spared. To release a brigand who will make a deadly attack on others is not clemency, but cruelty. Just as the severity of princely law is necessary to preserve the public peace, so we should applaud Christian leniency when we find it in bishops, who are the vicars of Christ. This was such an outstanding quality of Bishop Augustine that when in a certain city pagans had publicly attacked Christians in contravention of the emperor's edict and had harassed many

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Augustine's attitude towards them and his writings against them, see Brown *Augustine* chapters 19–21.

17 Pelagians, named for the British exegete and theologian Pelagius, an approximate contemporary of Augustine, argued that human beings can take steps towards salvation by their own human efforts, apart from divine grace. It was against them that Augustine affirmed the doctrines of the Fall and original sin. See Brown *Augustine* chapters 29–31. The issues raised by Pelagius haunted theologians through the whole of the Middle Ages and well into the early modern period.

18 For Augustine's views on coercion and his opposition to the death penalty, see Brown *Augustine* chapter 21.

and killed, or at least planned to kill, one or two and were now expecting severe punishment from the emperor, an educated person from their group wrote to Augustine and begged him to intervene and soften the emperor's wrath.[19] So outstanding was the gentleness of this most holy bishop that an enemy and an idolater was not afraid to ask what a friend would hardly dare to ask of a friend. The more impudent the demand, the more clearly it shows Augustine's almost incredible forbearance.

With the same gentle hand he guided the several communities that he had set up in accordance with the Apostolic Rule.[20] The penalty for trivial sins was an admonition. More serious sins brought a reproof. In desperate and irreparable cases there was the ultimate penalty – expulsion from the society of the pious. Those of his clergy who found it difficult to live according to their bishop's rule were allowed to move to the jurisdiction of other bishops who did not require their clergy to share a residence and way of life. He loved a perfect holiness, but one that was spontaneous, not imposed.

There was something else that was remarkable about this bishop. Despite his many outstanding virtues there was not the slightest trace of pride in him! You could say that he approached everyone with the loving heart of a father and a mother, that he brooded over the wicked that they might be reborn in Christ, that he cared for the weak as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings lest they perish,[21] and nurtured the virtuous so that they could develop to the full. There was no one so incurably heretical or so vile in other ways as to make him abandon hope for them so long as they had breath in their bodies. So in his books he pleads with heretics, not just to win the argument, but to do whatever lay within his power to make them well. When he chastises evildoers, he always mixes the oil of comfort with the wine of severity. No rebuke of his was ever so bleak that it did not at the same time breathe the sweetness of Christian love, which, according to the apostle Paul, suffers all things, hopes all things, believes all things.[22]

He was bishop of a single city called Hippo Regius (which is like naming it 'King's Stable'). There is another city with this name further east on the same coast, though the second part of the name is different (it is called

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19 The incident took place in the city of Calama in 408. It was Nectarius, a leading citizen of that city, who sought the intervention of Augustine (Ep 90).

20 Ie that a bishop and his clergy were to follow the example of the apostles by observing strict poverty and holding all things in common (cf Acts 4:32–7). See Augustine *Sermons* 355–6 (*De vita et moribus clericorum*).

21 Cf Matt 23:37.

22 1 Cor 13:7

Hippo Diarrhytus).[23] But Augustine took an interest in all the churches; he instructed their bishops, both in person and by sending them books and letters, showing them how to preach the gospel and providing them with weapons against the heretics. Being a farsighted man, he recognized the value of books, which could reach much farther than the human voice, and so he snatched whatever time he could for this activity.

To have more free time for his writing, he delegated those less important matters which, though not harmful to religion, would often distract one's thoughts from 'that excellent part' which Mary chose.[24] So he refused to be responsible for arranging marriages, though he would confirm a union, once made, with his blessing. He took no interest in building, although he raised no objections to those who did. He did not answer everyone's letters, only those that treated some issue in religion. Finally, when he began to feel the weight of years, he appointed a successor, to whom he assigned less important cases, leaving himself free for better things. At this time he brought together all his books, revised them, and put them in order, lest some works should be lost (as we know happened to the writings of Ambrose) or circulate in misleading and corrupt texts.

What a man he was, born, fashioned, and given to us by God to be a blessing to the whole church! When he saw it thrown into chaos by the invasion of Vandals, Goths, and other barbarians who had burst into Africa from Spain,[25] he began to be weary of this life. He did the only thing he could: he consoled his people and urged them to be tolerant. Then he departed from the world of the living. This man of enormous zeal, who was filled with the spirit of Christ, admired or (should I say?) fell passionately in love with the beauty, progress, and peace of the house of God. It is here, precisely here, that we see what it means to imitate the great bridegroom of the church; for every bishop is in some manner a bridegroom to his own church. It was the great bridegroom who said, 'The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.'[26] Augustine, who had never feared any danger when he could serve the interests of the church, and whose life had become a bitter sorrow now that he could no longer help the church in its trouble, would have gladly given his life for his sheep if only by such a sacrifice he could have

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23 For this more important coastal town, see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 5.23.

24 Luke 10:42. The reference is to Jesus' praise of Mary, the sister of Martha, whose interest in the spiritual is weighed against Martha's concern for the practical.

25 In 428–9

26 John 10:11

purchased the salvation of his flock. He even wished, like Paul, to become anathema for the sake of his children.[27]

Such piety, such charity, such passion made all of Augustine's writings as likely to inspire the reader to a love of piety as to instruct the mind. Some writers delight the idle reader with empty wit. Others teach important lessons in a sophisticated manner but do not make the reader love what he understands. Some inspire a zeal for holiness but do not at the same time increase our knowledge. Understanding is worthless unless you love what you have grasped. Yet where does a blind love lead us? Knowledge without charity puffs up its possessor with pride, while charity without knowledge mistakes the perilous for the salutary. 'Each seeks the other's aid and joins in harmony.'[28] But as soon as our incomparable Doctor grew strong in Christ, he put aside the pointless arguments of the sophists and turned his more than aquiline sharpness of mind towards the discovery of essential truth. He is so subtle in argument that if a subject requires logical precision, invariably he leaves the reader not just better informed but with a burning desire to amend his life; for what else can fire do, wherever you place it, but burn? He passionately loved what he taught, and taught brilliantly what he loved; both these qualities are kindled in the reader who pays close attention to the study of his writings.

Rhetoric has much in common with dialectic. Augustine had drunk deeply from the work of the rhetoricians. He seems to have been more taken by the philosophy of Plato, for Plato has a fine attractive style and has much to say about things separated from the body and things that cannot be apprehended by the senses but can be discerned by the eyes of the mind; and many of his ideas conform to Christian teachings. Either because Aristotle discusses complex questions in a rather jejune style or because he was not yet available for Latin speakers,[29] Augustine seems to have no knowledge of his philosophic works except for the *De enunciatione* and the *Categories* (that is, his work on 'the ten most general kinds' and on the 'five predicable words').[30] Porphyry published this work as an introduction to

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27 Rom 9:3

28 A quotation from Horace *Ars poetica* 411

29 The most influential of the early translations of Aristotle into Latin were those of Boethius (480–524), but these came too late for Augustine, who died in 430.

30 Aristotle (384–322 BC) in the *Categories* defines ten modes of predication, that is, different kinds of realities to which words can refer. He also has a parallel division into five classes, which later became known as the *Five Words* or the *Five Predicables*.

the philosophy of Aristotle.[31] You will not find any evidence that Augustine ever touched many of the works that Aristotle left us: the topics, the analytics, the elenchi, his writings on natural and ultramundane things,[32] on ethics, and on the state[33] – not to mention all the Greek commentators on Aristotle. Yet whatever morsel of Aristotelian logic he managed to acquire was enough to win him a reputation as a logician and, what is more, to inspire the bitter enmity of heretics, for when they were overcome by the sheer weight of the truth, they used to complain they were the victims of dialectical trickery. In those days Africa had such a feeble command of that subject that they regarded anyone as a logician who could distinguish substance from accidents, genus from species, or a relative from an absolute. This explains why Julian seemed the one person fit to engage with Augustine on equal terms.[34]

But dialectic existed before anyone taught it, for it was not one of those subjects that men developed by an act of will, but belonged, like arithmetic, with those that came about from human observation and discernment. Augustine had such remarkable keenness of intellect, such good sense and quickness of mind, that even among those of a later generation who had devoted a good part of their lives to dialectic you would not find someone who could see the direction of a case more quickly or more accurately, or who was cleverer at applying to it arguments and evidence from Scripture, or who could more neatly cut through the knot of a question.

He did not write much, but dictated. The greater part of his work was taken down by secretaries from oral dictation, as, for example, most of the commentaries on Scripture addressed to the people, which he himself calls 'tractates,' and his controversies with heretics, which according to the common practice of those times took place in public. Nowhere else, it seems to me, is he more remarkable. People with ordinary ability, if they are prepared to burn the midnight oil, can at times hammer out something respectable. But who would not admire, in a work dictated extempore, such clarity of mind, such powers of memory, such command of language – and all this in

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31 Porphyry (232–c 305) published both a school commentary on the *Categories* and a work entitled *Introduction to the Categories of Aristotle and On the Five Words*. The latter was widely used in the Middle Ages as a textbook on logic.

32 These must be Aristotle's works on physics and astronomy.

33 Presumably the *Politics*

34 Julian of Eclanum (c 386–454), a defender of Pelagianism who displayed a combination of keen dialectical ability and scurrilous rhetoric in a bitter literary controversy with Augustine. See Brown *Augustine* chapter 32.

a consistently attractive manner? Is there anyone today who could do this, even among those who have concentrated all their efforts on developing the art of speaking?

But I am running away with myself, for I had not intended an encomium on Augustine. If that had been my plan, this would be a small fraction of the praise that is his due. I only wanted to demonstrate how sad it was that it took the publishers so long to give the public one of the church's greatest treasures, a work that had the greatest claim to be in everyone's hands. They were deterred, I suppose, by the magnitude of the cost. The first person to attempt this important work was Johann Amerbach,[35] a man of singular piety, who was blessed certainly with material wealth, but much more in the qualities of his mind; nothing deterred him from making the whole of Augustine the common possession of all, not the huge expense, nor the perseverance needed in acquiring manuscripts, nor the tedium of collation, nor the difficulty of the project, nor the hazards of the market. He was drawn, not by the love of profit, but by a genuine piety that breathes through all his prefaces, and by his desire to restore those ancient Doctors of the church, who it pained him to see were almost forgotten. So I do not doubt that all who have advanced to a deeper faith through the works of Augustine bless the spirit of Amerbach. When he was working with even greater enthusiasm on the entire corpus of Jerome, God called him away to heaven. On his deathbed he handed that task over to his three sons, Bruno, Basilius, and Bonifacius, whom, with this in mind, he had caused to be educated in the three tongues. They carried out faithfully and zealously what their excellent father wished. He had brought them up so well for a life of piety and learning that in a certain way he survives in them as a greater and better person than he was himself – and he still survives, for only the eldest has met his destined end.[36]

There are such hordes of monks in the world whose easy life is supported by large endowments. There are numerous abbots with rich revenues who do nothing but erect buildings, keep horses, and feast. The publication of Augustine was rightfully their responsibility, but a layman took it on of his own free will. To it he devoted as much care, enthusiasm, and vigilance as was possible in an inexperienced age that had very few people trained in that sort of literary work. What is more surprising is that although the writings of Augustine have now been available to scholars for several years,

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35 On Amerbach and the patristic editions that he undertook to publish, see Ep 309:12n.

36 Bruno Amerbach died of the plague in 1519.

there has been no public criticism of him, while everyone has been finding fault with Jerome.[37] If I did not have a lot of witnesses who were either present at the printing or in charge of the work, no one would be likely to believe the multitude of mistakes I came across and removed, even in passages where no corruption was suspected. Augustine has his own personal style, which is subtle and combines many ideas in lengthy periods. This calls for a reader who is familiar with the style, who is sharp and attentive, with a good memory and the capacity to stand up to tedium and hard work; you would not find many such readers today. Moreover, although Augustine is less inclined to parade his knowledge of pagan authors than Jerome, yet he does allude to them frequently in passing. Because of these characteristics, some reader with more presumption than perception has altered whatever he found baffling.

But the errors caused by the carelessness of scribes and the ignorance of readers have at any rate some line of defence which, if it cannot excuse, certainly extenuates their guilt, although it should have been the public responsibility of princes, prelates, and abbots to see that copies of valuable, and especially of sacred, books were corrected by good scholars and preserved in the public libraries. But who could absolve from the charge of sacrilege those who, when there was no error to correct or any need for change, wantonly and deliberately altered Augustine's writings, changing *que* to *et*, *et* to *que*, *sed* to *at*, *at* to *sed*, *dixit* to *ait*, *ait* to *dixit*,[38] a verb to a participle, a participle to a verb, and introducing many other similar changes. You would imagine they were playing a game with another man's work.

I have found this shocking state of affairs everywhere, and especially in the work *De Trinitate*. I have noticed it also while collating a manuscript that was made available to me by a monastery in Flanders – for the moment its name escapes me.[39] It is a very beautiful and old manuscript – you would

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37 Erasmus is apparently referring to his edition of Jerome, which had received more criticism than the unsatisfactory Amerbach edition of Augustine. Much of that criticism came from detractors in England (Epp 541:99–104, 843:598–630, 948:225–38). It is probable, however, that here Erasmus has in mind primarily the hostile comments of Diego López Zúñiga in the letters to Juan de Vergara that are printed in CWE 8 (pages 341:46, 344–5:60–1). It was from Vergara that Erasmus learned of Zúñiga's stated intention to expose the 'errors' and 'Lutheran impieties' to be found in the annotations on Jerome and many other of his works; see Ep 1277:11–23.

38 The Latin words are examples of synonyms (for 'and,' 'but,' 'said').

39 The Benedictine abbey of Gembloux (Ep 1547:12–13) in Namur, now the site of an agricultural college

have thought it would be reliable and authoritative. But there were scarcely two lines together that you would not want to cross out with the pen. We are not talking here about slips or the work of a sleepy copyist, but about the disrespectful tinkering of someone with too much time on his hands. In some places he had filled out sentences by adding unnecessary words; for example, when St Augustine cited from the canon of Scripture just what was needed for the point at issue, he expanded the testimony of Scripture by quoting further from the same passage, although this was in no way relevant. We see this especially in the commentaries that Augustine wrote on the Epistle to the Romans and the Epistle to the Galatians. In several passages I was amused at the mad folly of scribes who incorporated into the text notes written by some stupid reader in the margin of the manuscript. I shall cite two examples out of many: first, from Epistle 58, where we read these words of Augustine: 'I do not think that the prophets who are mentioned after the apostles are the same as those who historically lived before the time of the apostles, but are those who by grace received under the apostles the gift of interpreting Scripture and of insight into minds, or of foretelling the coming time.'[40] In the earlier edition we find the participle 'coming' separated from its noun 'time' by a long-winded supplement, which is not only foolish and stupid but does not add even one jot to the meaning. For the issue is not the identity of the apostles or the origin of the word, but the kind of prophets about whom the apostle was speaking in the context.

I shall not go over this long worthless note for fear of boring you, but will select only a few points from which you can guess how mindless the rest is. He begins like this: 'If I myself, so that you may know what I feel about this passage, hoped to make a distinction . . .' (you will recognize the flowery language). And then: 'To come to the force of the term: "Apostolos" in Greek comes from *apos*, meaning "augmentation" or "preeminence," and *scolon*, which means "sending," that is, an apostle is sent out preeminently for augmentation, that is, for the augmentation of the Catholic faith. Alternatively, *apostolus* means *post missus* "sent later," ' and so on. Can you imagine anything more bizarre or nonsensical than this? *Apos* in Greek means about as much as *Kiskildrivium*[41] would mean in Latin, and the Greek word

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40 This comes from a letter of Paulinus to Augustine, Ep 121.2.9 in modern editions.

41 This, as Allen suggests, must be a nonsense word, the point being that *apos* does not exist in Greek. Allen cites approvingly the suggestion of H.W. Garrod that the word was student slang formed from *quisquiliae* (worthless stuff) on the model of *quadrivium*.

scôlon means 'stumbling block.'[42] Then he has another fantastically silly notion: *apost* in the noun *apostolus* is added for *postmodum* 'presently,' for which barbarian Latinists generally say *depost*. But if, as he himself maintains, *apostolus* is a Greek word, what is the Latin preposition *post* doing there? He follows this with: '*propheta* comes from *pro*, that is, *procul* "far away" and *for, faris*, etc "speak," since the Greek *propheta* has the same meaning as the Latin *praedictor* "foreteller."'

I think I have quoted enough to give an idea of the nugacity of the whole. The work is composed as though someone, on behalf of Augustine, is explaining to Paulinus those points about which he had indicated his perplexity. The other passage is in the second book of the work 'On the Sermon of the Lord Delivered on the Mount.' Among the fruits of the Spirit Paul mentions joy,[43] but lest anyone should think that he was speaking about joy of any kind, Augustine explains the passage as follows: 'You must realize that here "joy" is used in its proper sense. Strictly speaking, what evil men feel is not joy but passion, just as I said earlier that "will" is also used in its strict sense, being something that evil men do not possess etc.'[44] Although Augustine's words have nothing obscure about them, someone, it seems, has tried to make the meaning clearer with the following: 'Joy, like will, does not belong to virtue. These things, rather, pertain to the saints. Passion[45] and desire should be assigned to sinners.' This stupid and foolish comment, which was taken from the margin and incorporated into the text, troubled me for some considerable time. I have had a constant struggle with aberrations of this sort.

Someone had taken fragments picked from here and there and put them together under the name of Augustine as a new work. Another had combined spurious writings with those of Augustine. Another had turned a *Quaestio* into a letter by stitching on a few words at the beginning. Not to go through every example one by one, I can say that there is scarcely any author in whose work the shameless and lazy have played fast and loose

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42 The Greek form is σκώλου, meaning 'a stumbling block.' The confusion in this absurd etymology must have arisen from a corrupt reading of an earlier derivation. *Stolos* in Greek means 'mission' and is in fact related to the word *apostolos* 'apostle,' but this at some point must have been written as *scolos*. The confusion of 't' and 'c' in manuscripts is very common.

43 Gal 5:22

44 Augustine *De sermone Domini in monte* 2.24.81 PL 34 1306

45 The Latin word is *gestus*, which in proper classical and medieval Latin means 'gesture.' Here, however, it is clearly intended by its author to be related in meaning to the verb *gestire* 'to desire passionately.'

so disrespectfully as in the books of this sacred Doctor of the church, and I leave out of account the forgeries, some not without evidence of learning, some barely tolerable, and some utterly ignorant. But among all the works that have been falsely attributed to him, none is more silly or more brazen that the *Sermones ad heremitas*, in which neither the words, nor the ideas, nor the general character, nor anything else is worthy of Augustine.[46] And yet the sweet man who fabricated this work, whoever he was, was confident that he would be taken for Augustine; and, to be sure, his lips found a lettuce that suited them.[47] However, we have removed none of these, though where certain works have appeared twice or more in the corpus of Augustine, we have thought it sufficient to print them once so as not to burden these weighty volumes with superfluous baggage. By the addition of critical notes we have indicated spurious works, those that are doubtful, and those that are mixed. It is truly regrettable that these indignities have been committed on an excellent author, but it is equally surprising that up to this point there have been no scholarly complaints about them. One may infer from this that either Augustine was not usually read by theologians or read inattentively. Certainly no one could have persuaded me that so many errors lurked in so celebrated a writer.

Nothing was further from my mind than to undertake this responsibility. The immense number of volumes was a deterrent, as was the difficulty of the task, which called for the vigour of a young man and an adamantine constitution. In my case both my years and my health absolutely discouraged such laborious activity. But Johann Froben, of blessed memory, a man whose exceptional services to learning earned him the undying affection of every scholar, finally squeezed a promise out of me to correct a gathering[48] of the letters so that he could show a sample of the work at the next fair. I agreed, but on condition that he not expect anything more. He accepted the terms. But when I saw that he intended to complete the volume of letters and

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46 The work in question is more commonly known as *Sermones ad fratres in eremo*, though several editions were published in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries under the title that Erasmus uses here. Allegedly sermons preached by Augustine to followers living in the hermitages that he founded near Hippo, they were in fact fourteenth-century forgeries aimed at bolstering the fanciful claim that the Order of Augustinian Hermits had its origin in the religious communities established by St Augustine and was thus more ancient and honourable than the larger mendicant orders founded in the thirteenth century by Sts Dominic and Francis. Text in PL 40 1233–1358.

47 For the expression 'like lips, like lettuce,' see *Adagia* I x 71.

48 The Latin is *senio*, which means a gathering of 6 sheets, yielding 24 pages.

that there was no one able, or at least no one willing, to take on the editor's role, my resolution was overcome partly by the dogged determination of a very dear friend and partly by the spiritual value of the enterprise. So I took on the whole of this volume, but that was all; I solemnly declared again and again that if he wished to proceed, he should find another editor and not divert me from more pressing tasks to the detriment not just of learning, but of his own interests as well. To cut a long story short, when no one appeared who was willing to shoulder the burden, and Johann Froben asserted that he was firmly resolved, if nothing else was available, to reprint the complete Augustine, whatever its quality, I allowed the burden to be placed on my shoulders, partly out of regard for a friend to whom I could refuse nothing, but more importantly, because I thought it would be a greater sin and less easy to forgive if, at great expense, such an outstanding Doctor of the church came a second time upon the world's stage in an edition smothered with errors, whose deficiencies would be all the more glaring because the greater elegance of the printing and the magnificence of the volumes would draw all eyes to it – it would be like showing off fine purple soiled with filthy stains.

Finally, no sooner had I set out on this vast sea and set my sails to the wind than I discovered many more problems than I had anticipated. More than once I despaired and thought of abandoning the project. I was urged or, to be more accurate, pushed to this conclusion by the evident danger to my health. Then I was given a fright by the example of Johann Froben, who died in the middle of the job,[49] though he was a man with a strong body and deserved a very long life. But what had at first given me pause had the effect, when I considered the matter more closely, of spurring me on, for friendship among good men should not be limited to a man's lifetime, especially when the weight of this most challenging of occupations had fallen on his sons, Hieronymus[50] and Johann Erasmius,[51] and the other children. I could not think of failing them just when they had lost such a father. All the affection I had for him I have now transferred to them. So I strengthened my resolve and decided it was better to sacrifice my life on this holy task than not complete what I had once begun. Thus I overcame all my reluctance. The further I progressed, the lighter the work became through growing familiarity. Augustine himself, I believe, breathed upon my efforts from heaven with the prospering wind of his favour, until at last the harbour came in

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49 In October 1527; see Ep 1900.
50 Ep 2112 n9
51 Ep 635:26n

view, and now, as we enter it with the help of our merciful Lord, we sing our joyous sailors' song.[52]

In dividing the work into volumes I have adopted the following order.

I have collected in the first volume everything relating to the life, character, intelligence, and feelings of Augustine. My hope was that this would produce a deeper understanding and the work would be read more eagerly; for affection for the teacher makes the pupil more interested and attentive. I have added the author's *Progymnasmata*, in which, while he was still a child in Christ or a mere neophyte, he practised his art, showing great promise of the excellence to come.

I devoted the second volume to the letters, partly because many of these he wrote as a young man, and partly because in these all the characteristics of his nature are most easily observed.

I devoted the third and fourth volumes to his instructional works.

The fifth contains the *City of God*, for this work, which both provides instruction and refutes errors, particularly those of the pagans, is a combination of these two genres. In this part of the corpus there is nothing of mine, since at my urging the learned and erudite Vives took personal responsibility for it.

I included in the sixth and seventh volumes polemical attacks on various heresies.

In the eighth and ninth are collected the tractates, the name Augustine gave to exegetical sermons on the Scriptures that he delivered before the people, though I appended to the ninth a miscellaneous group of works that some spiritual men seem to have prepared to kindle a love of heavenly things in their hearts.

The tenth contains homilies on various subjects, among which many are spurious, as is the case also in volume nine.

To produce some identifiable order in individual volumes, I have followed either the order of the Scriptures that are interpreted or the chronological order of the various heresies. Augustine himself in his *Retractations* preferred to follow the order of events in his life and of his gradual progress in the Christian faith, reviewing his writings as a catechumen, then those produced when he was born again at the sacred font, those written when he was a priest, and finally those belonging to the time when he was a bishop; the exception is the epistles and the tractates, for which he appears to have

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52 'Sailors' song' is a loose translation of the Greek word κέλευμα, here printed in its Latin form *celeuma*, which is strictly the boatswain's call that gave the time to the rowers.

intended a place of their own. He did not complete this part of his plan, as is clear from several of his writings, for he was working on this in extreme old age; it is as though he foresaw that his last day was imminent and therefore worked all the harder so that, when he could no longer assist the church with the ministry of his voice, he would survive in his books in as correct and complete a form as possible. He almost succeeded, for there is scarcely any other author from whose writings less has been lost – though no text could ever be safe from the hands of the corruptor.

I shall not enlarge on all the effort I put into these volumes. Anyone who has the time can reckon it up. Nor would I have the nerve to guarantee that there is nothing left for a corrector to do. In some places the old codices failed me; sometimes in so long a work sleep crept over me, which Flaccus considers a pardonable weakness in human nature.[53] If an error has been caused by the carelessness of the workmen, that cannot be blamed on me, since I have no direct authority in the printing house. I can only provide instructions to those in charge of the business, which I did meticulously. Whatever my modest talents could accomplish, I carried out conscientiously.

It remains, most honoured bishop, that this great Doctor of the church go forth into the world with the auspicious commendation of your name and with your support; for men will seize upon it all the more avidly when they see that Augustine has always held a unique place with you; for besides the illustrious record of your family, you yourself are so abundantly blessed with an excellent intellect (or should I speak rather of a gift of God?) that you do more than live up to the shining distinction of your line and the dignity of your high office (for no other office in Spain is more revered or indeed more richly endowed), and you bring great honour to the honours you bear. This is apparent from the testimony of those who see your Grace at close quarters and admire you, and the same impression is given by your letters, which reveal in every phrase a singular piety of mind combined with supreme self-control and courtesy, as well as the erudition that becomes a bishop and a discriminating judgment. So the primacy of all Spain is yours, not just by title, but by merit. Not wishing to leave anything undone that you judge useful for strengthening and furthering the church of God, you are a generous and zealous supporter of three universities, those at Alcalá, Salamanca, and Toledo,[54] ensuring that languages, the liberal arts,

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53 Horace *Ars poetica* 359–60: '. . . the good Homer nods, but sleep may well creep over a long work.'

54 The three universities in question were Alcalá, Salamanca, and Compostela (not Toledo); see Epp 1814:505–10, 1876:17–19.

but above all theology are taught there by men who are as sound as they are learned. From these institutions we now see many men emerging, as from the proverbial Trojan horse,[55] equipped with solid learning, without any of the training that up to now has been generally inculcated into the young, a training that is both foolish and pointless and designed more for theatrical show than to produce the fruits of godliness and learning. For there is a middle ground between those who heretofore have taught the traditional subjects in the schools in their confusing and sophistical way and those who think that all humane disciplines should be abolished along with the schools.[56]

For some time now John, the excellent bishop of Rochester, has been working to the same end. He is head of the University of Cambridge, where he established three colleges at great expense,[57] not to educate young men in fields that prepare them for the sophistical wrestling ring while making them unresponsive and ill-suited to serious work, but to graduate those who are trained in genuine disciplines and in sober debate to preach the word of God in an earnest and evangelical spirit and by their effective eloquence commend it to the minds of learned listeners. He himself has long provided such a model to the church of Christ in his speech and writing and in the integrity of his life. He did so with the authority and under the auspices of William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury and primate of all England, to whom, in order of precedence, he stands as suffragan, but in respect of his godly nature and the excellence of his virtues as a very dear brother in Christ.

I know that neither he nor you are fond of such encomia, but by mentioning these things I am recognizing the public value of your service and giving thanks to God for his goodness rather than celebrating your worthy deeds. But just as modesty demands that we take no notice of the praises of

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55 *Adagia* IV ii 1

56 Erasmus means the reformers. Unlike his friend Bonifacius Amerbach, Erasmus did not make a careful distinction between the Lutheran reformers, who supported the humanities, and the radicals (eg Karlstadt and the Anabaptists) who disdained all book learning beyond a knowledge of the plain text of the Bible. He was, rather, much given to lumping them all together (with the sole exception of Melanchthon) as enemies of learning. See Erika Rummel *The Confessionalization of Humanism in Reformation Germany* (New York 2000) 31–4.

57 In his capacity as chaplain and confessor to Lady Margaret Beaufort, the mother of Henry VII, Fisher was the designer and executor of her plans to endow learning at Cambridge. This led to the foundation of two colleges, not three: Christ's College in 1505 and St John's College in 1516. Cf Ep 432:3n.

men, so gratitude will not allow us to be silent about those through whom the kindness of God heaps so many blessings on mankind. Examples of great goodness should be set, like a lamp, upon a hill so that they may shed their light on all and inspire many to emulation. If in this work any credit belongs to my efforts, I shall gladly allow the largest part of it to be credited to your Highness, for you have refreshed me when I was weary and, as the saying goes, thrown a bracing shower of water on the running horse.[58] And you did not limit your help to friendly encouragement but, without being asked, proved your generosity. We owe it in great part to you that the emperor Charles is an enthusiastic supporter of both honest studies and the Christian faith, and unless I am completely mistaken, bears no ill will towards Erasmus.

This preface may seem too long-winded to be sent to a prelate who is heavily engaged in so many important matters – but apart from the fact that it is not written for the eyes of one man only, there is no reason why you should not take it up again after a pause. May the Lord Jesus help us all by keeping your Grace safe and well for a long time, and may you flourish with every blessing.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 1529

2158 / To Willibald Pirckheimer Freiburg, 9 May 1529

This letter (= Ep 1225 in WPB) was first published in the *Pirckheimeri Opera*. For the most part it consists of a first-hand account of the iconoclasm that accompanied the victory of the Reformation in Basel (cf Ep 2097 n1) and of Erasmus' consequent move to Freiburg (cf Epp 2149 introduction and 2196). But the final paragraph is a brief account of the execution of Louis de Berquin, which Erasmus would describe in much greater detail in Ep 2188.

ERASMUS TO HIS FRIEND PIRCKHEIMER, GREETING

At last I have made the move, leaving the Rauraci[1] to become a resident of the Breisgau. When a miscellaneous mob was assembling in the town square,

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58 *Adagia* I x 51, literally 'to pour cold [water] on the runner.' Erasmus explains the adage as derived from the racetrack. Apparently it was the practice to pour cold water over the horses to make them run faster.

2158

1 In classical times the Rauraci, mentioned in Caesar's *Bellum gallicum*, were Gauls living along the Rhine around Basel. Cf Epp 1280A:1–2, 2161:31.

armed and with artillery in position, everyone who had anything he would not want to lose was afraid. For some time it looked like war. The better part favoured the church side, but they were outnumbered. The others were a mixed lot, many of them outsiders, many ruined men, many notorious scoundrels. They started this commotion just before winter, so that no one would find it easy to escape or summon help.

Seeing that assemblies were taking place contrary to the decree of the council and in contravention of the oath,[2] the church party took up arms. The other side soon followed, even bringing hired gangs and cannons into the town square. The council used its authority to have the church party lay down its arms. The other side did the same – reluctantly – but only for a time. When they decided to vent their wrath against the saints,[3] both male and female, they assembled in the marketplace, with their brass crossbows in position, and spent several nights there in the open air, having built a huge fire, and causing widespread panic. But no one's house was broken into and no one was personally attacked, except that the burgomaster, a close neighbour of mine and a fine speaker, who had often done the city good service, escaped by night in a boat and would have perished had he not done so.[4] Several others also fled through fear, but were ordered to return on the authority of the council if they wished to enjoy the rights of citizenship. All who favoured old-fashioned religion were removed, so that council votes would not be split.

Just how well the council kept the turmoil under control could be seen in that the dissidents, with the assistance of workmen and artisans, removed from the churches whatever they pleased. They showed such disrespect towards the statues of the saints and even of the crucified one that it is surprising that no miracle took place there, for in the past even the mildest slight cast upon the saints used to produce a host of miracles! No statues were left in the churches, or in vestibules, or cloisters, or monasteries. All painted images were covered over with whitewash. Anything that would burn was thrown on the fire; what would not burn was torn into shreds. Neither value nor artistic merit ensured that an object would be spared. Soon the mass was totally prohibited; it was not even permissible to celebrate the sacred rite at home or attend it in a neighbouring village.

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2 The oath (often renewed annually), taken by the citizens of virtually all free cities, to keep the peace and abide by the laws.

3 By smashing their images in the churches; Ep 2097 n1

4 Heinrich Meltinger (Ep 2112 n17)

When the worst of our fears had been removed and there was some reason to hope that no violent action would be taken against life or property (for Oecolampadius was advocating clemency at least to this extent – although every day new decrees were emerging from their assemblies), I began to think of moving, though I kept my intentions a secret. A dreadful cold prevented me from acting before Easter.[5] I worried that going into exile would turn out badly for me. I also had fears that they would hold me back when I was about to leave. So I had obtained from Ferdinand two official letters, one summoning me to him, the other guaranteeing me safe passage through all of his dominions and those of the emperor.[6] First I secretly sent on my money, rings, and silverware, things that are most inviting to thieves. Somewhat later I openly loaded two carts with boxes and beds.

When this was done, the news reached me that Oecolampadius and the preachers were angry with me, and for two extremely frivolous reasons, as you will see from the enclosed letter.[7] When I reflected on the current state of affairs, I wrote to Oecolampadius a conciliatory letter, and at the same time invited him to meet me.[8] We talked together for a long time, but without rancour. He offered me his sincere friendship, which I did not refuse, provided he would permit me to differ on any point of doctrine. At the end he began to dissuade me from leaving Basel. I replied that I was leaving unwillingly from a city that for many reasons I found most congenial, but that I could no longer endure the animosity, for I was seen to be in favour of everything that goes on here in public. He pressed me, but I replied that it was no use, for all my belongings were in Freiburg. He insisted that at least I should leave with the intention of returning. 'I shall stay in Freiburg for a few months,' I said, 'then I shall go wherever the Lord calls me.' With this we shook hands and parted.

He communicated this conversation, I suspect, to the tribune,[9] who has always been the principal instigator of this business, a sensible and level-

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5 Easter fell on 28 March. On Erasmus' cold at this time, see Ep 2125 n3.

6 See Ep 2090 introduction.

7 Ep 2147

8 Ep 2147:33–5

9 Jakob Meyer (1473–1541), who was a prosperous clothier, a prominent member of the city council representing one of the city's guilds, and a close friend of Oecolampadius. Here, as in Allen Ep 2328:16, Erasmus calls him *Tribunus*, a classical word often used in this period without rigorous adherence to its classical meaning ('tribune of the people'). In this case, it is probably intended as the equivalent of *Oberzunftmeister* (supreme guild master), Meyer's title from

Jakob Meyer
Chalk drawing by Hans Holbein the Younger
Kunstmuseum Basel

headed man. He put forward many arguments to Beatus[10] against my leaving. No one said a word to me. If I had stated that I was leaving because I was offended, they would have promised to make things right. If I had given as a reason that I could not approve the innovations they were making in the city, they would have challenged me to refute their position. So I put the blame on the anger of the princes and the resentment of the theologians. Besides, I had got wind of wild threats from men with some influence in that faction. Indeed, there had already been indications of what would follow. So I thought it was not wise to live in a city where even the meanest wretch was entitled to lash out at me. Nor is it reasonable to expect that the council and the people would be truly sympathetic to one who, in his words and in his writings, disagreed with their beliefs.

When I was about to embark, they made some sort of difficulty over my housekeeper's baggage.[11] I wanted to leave from a more secluded dock so that we should not be a public spectacle. The council repeatedly refused that, although previously it had always been permissible to leave by any harbour in the city. I obeyed and left from the bridge, accompanied by several of my friends. No one said a word to me.

This little expedition turned out better than I had expected. The city council showed me every courtesy, acting on their own before King Ferdinand wrote his letter of commendation.[12] They provided me with a princely residence,[13] which had been built for Maximilian but not finished. I shall stay here for several months, unless war breaks out.[14] A number of people are flowing into the city from Basel, and there is a rumour that the whole cathedral chapter will move here.[15] Nothing would bring down upon the

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1522 through 1529 (from 1530 he served every other year as burgomaster). Historically, representatives of the guilds had gained admission to city councils as a 'popular' counterweight to the members representing the old municipal aristocracy.

10 Rhenanus (Ep 2105 n8)

11 See Ep 2151:13 with n4.

12 Cf lines 45–7 above.

13 Ep 2112 n4

14 The so-called First Kappel War would soon break out in Switzerland, but it was over almost before it began and did not spread into the neighbouring Breisgau; see Ep 2173 n10.

15 The rumour was true. The cathedral chapter had already left Basel in February, going first to Neuenburg am Rhein, which is in the Breisgau, before moving on to Freiburg in mid-May. Cf Ep 2196 n31.

city the wrath of its enemies more quickly than that. I seem fairly welcome everywhere here.

I don't know if you are acquainted with Louis Berquin.[16] He was burned at Paris on April 17. On the previous day the twelve judges had pronounced sentence, stipulating that after his books had been burned and he had recanted his tongue should be pierced, following which he should be imprisoned for life.[17] When he appealed to the king and the pope, the judges angrily replied that they would take care that he would not appeal to anyone again, and on the next day they handed the man over to be burned. If he did not deserve this, I am saddened; if he did deserve it, I am saddened twice over. I am not well enough acquainted with the reasons for the case, and I have no knowledge of Berquin except what I have gathered from his writings and the testimony of friends; but no one had anything bad to say about his morals, he was blessed with a splendid position in life, and he was among the king's dearest friends. I always feared he would suffer the fate that has overtaken him. I never sent him a letter without urging him seriously to abandon this quarrel, to which there could be no happy ending. He won his first case.[18] He flaunted his success even in writing.[19] I discouraged him from doing this, but to no effect. My advice was to slip away somewhere, using the excuse of a legation, and let the hornets alone. He was full of confidence and told me to be more optimistic. A little later he was taken back to prison, and would have perished, had not the king returned from Spain and rescued him from the flames.[20] From prison he was surrendered to the court, but still under guard. Finally, when he was freed, he began a case against the three priors whose verdict had found him guilty of heresy and also against the most sacred faculty.[21] I always predicted an unhappy outcome, even supposing his case were not absolutely weak. But he kept promising himself – and me – a spectacular victory.[22] What will you do with a man who is determined on self-destruction? These events will

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16 On Louis de Berquin and his three trials for heresy in France, see Epp 2027 n1, 2188 introduction.

17 On the panel of judges that condemned Berquin, see Ep 2027 n5. The final sentence was in fact signed by eleven judges. See Farge 'Berquin' 70 n80.

18 In 1523

19 Cf Epp 2077:26, 2188:109.

20 Berquin's second trial had taken place while King Francis was a prisoner in Spain, but he made it back to France in time to prevent the imposition of the death penalty. See Epp 1692 n9, 1875:104–7 with nn33–4.

21 Cf Epp 1692:61–3, 1875:107–11, 2188:147–9.

22 Cf Epp 2048:27–34, 2066:29–30, 1875:111–14.

greatly puff up[23] Béda to attack the supporters of languages and polite letters. In my last letter to Berquin I wrote that up to that point there was no one whose friendship had proved more ominous for me, nor had I seen anyone whose intentions were more courageous, while being utterly disastrous, or anyone whose hopes were equally unshakeable, yet quite unfounded.[24] I trust the Lord has received him into his peace. Farewell.

Freiburg, 9 May 1529

2159 / To Erasmus Schets Freiburg, 9 May 1529

This letter was first published by Allen from the autograph in the British Library (MS Add 38512 fol 33 verso). Erasmus' reply to Ep 2115, it was carried by a Bruges schoolmaster (see n20) who took a long time to deliver it.

Cordial greetings. My dearest Schets, I received your highly rhetorical letter, in which you seem ready to take me to court because, while I honour many countries with my presence, my native land is the only place I refuse to dignify with any consideration. In its name you make all sorts of promises: wine, a house, friends, anything and everything. But where, I ask you, are these magnificent gifts that you are promising? For many years I lived there at my own expense. Who with the sole exception of Pieter Gillis[1] offered me accommodation? Apart from yourself and him, is there anyone I could trust? Those in control of the University of Louvain treated me as though I were a dog and not a man.[2] As for the court, it is as cold and beggarly as any place could be.

I am being lured to England with lavish promises;[3] I have several times been invited to Trent by Bernhard, bishop of the city and supreme chancellor to king Ferdinand, with an offer of five hundred gold florins.[4] King Fer-

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23 Literally 'raise the crest'; see *Adagia* I viii 69, an adage derived from observation of birds, who puff out their feathers when eager to attack.

24 Ep 2077:17–34

2159

1 Ep 2089

2 But cf Epp 1897:9–12, 1899:96–9, and 2089:21–2, reports indicating that the situation in Louvain had improved.

3 See Epp 1878, 1998; and cf Ep 2014:60–3.

4 See Ep 2097:13–20 with n4; cf also Ep 1771:13–16. If Florentine gold florins (and not Rhenish gold florins) are meant, with a value of 56d sterling and 80d groot Flemish per florin, then this sum was worth £116 13s 4d sterling

dinand invites me to Vienna, offering four hundred on the sole condition that I live there.[5] The king of France once issued a most generous invitation,[6] but circumstances there have now altered. Anton Fugger sent his own messenger with an offer of one hundred gold florins for travelling expenses and an annual payment of the same amount, if I agreed to move to Augsburg.[7] Here the city made available to me a truly princely residence.[8] It was built for the emperor Maximilian, though it is not yet finished. On top of this they are ready to show me every possible courtesy. I have received letters from important people inviting me to Cologne with promises that are not mere words.[9] What has your Brabant ever done to match these things? Wherever a man is well treated, that is his homeland.[10] In fact, I would rather go to Italy than Brabant, if Mars did not frighten me off.[11]

About my little treasure, go on doing what you are doing until I write and tell you what I want done. I am surprised that in England nothing is coming from the archbishop, for what I am expecting is not an *ex gratia* payment but rather income from benefices that I have resigned.[12] What Tunstall gives is at his pleasure.[13] The bishop of Lincoln sent fifteen nobles through Franz Birckmann, who (surprisingly) handed them over in good faith to Hieronymus Froben.[14] I suspect that Canterbury has been offended in some

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(4,666.67 days' wages for a Cambridge master mason) and £166 13s 4d groot Flemish (4,000 days' wages for an Antwerp master mason).

5 See Ep 2000:17–21 with n3; Erasmus' reply is Ep 2005.

6 See Ep 1375.

7 Cf Ep 2145:2–4. These 100 gold coins were probably Florentine florins, then worth about 56d sterling or 80d groot Flemish, and the sum given equivalent to £23 6s 8d sterling or £33 6s 8d groot Flemish. If, however, they were Rhenish gold florins, worth about 40d sterling, the amount would have been only £16 13s 4d sterling.

8 See Ep 2112 n4.

9 See Epp 2137, 2146.

10 This is a variant of the adage 'Home is everywhere,' *Adagia* II ii 93.

11 Italy was the principal scene of the seemingly endless conflict between Emperor Charles V and King Francis I. The sack of Rome (May 1527) by the emperor's mutinous troops and the dislocations it caused were still fresh in everyone's mind.

12 Archbishop Warham forwarded income from two benefices; see Allen line 26n.

13 Cuthbert Tunstall, bishop of London. His generous financial support for Erasmus is documented in Epp 597, 651, 832, 1726, 1760, 1764, 1769, 1781.

14 John Longland, bishop of Lincoln (Ep 1535), regularly gave Erasmus 15 nobles a year; on the value of the gift see Epp 1758:5–6 with n6, 2072:4–6 with n5. On Birckmann, whom Erasmus suspected of dishonesty and double-dealing, see Ep 2091 n14. He had probably turned the money over to Froben at the Frankfurt book fair; cf Ep 2112 n9.

A bishop, possibly John Longland, vesting
Miniature from a pontifical commissioned by Longland, with his arms at the bottom
BL MS Add 21974 fol 2 verso
Reproduced by permission of the British Library

way.[15] There is a great infestation of informers there, and possibly the Romanizers are nettling the man. I am almost of a mind to send my servant back there again, provided the war situation makes this possible.[16]

As for the Courtrai pension,[17] I hear nothing of it. Next month a whole year will be owing. You promised you would look after that through a business acquaintance of yours.[18]

It seems the English do not have much trust in Luis de Castro,[19] I don't know why. You will find out the rest of my news from the sheet which the bearer of this letter will show you.[20] All good wishes to you and to your wife and children, who are very dear to you.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 7 May 1529

Your friend, Erasmus of Rotterdam (written in my own hand)

To the honourable Erasmus Schets. In Antwerp

2160 / To Bonifacius Amerbach [Freiburg, May 1529]

The autograph of this letter (= AK Ep 1353) is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS AN III 15 74). It was first published in the *Epistolae familiares*. There is no clear indication of date. Allen speculated that Erasmus was dispatching documents to one of the agents mentioned in Ep 2153:15–16.

Put a cover over this little packet, after sealing the string, but watch you do not punch a hole in it, because of the documents enclosed. Write nothing but the following inside: 'You will oblige me greatly if you will see to the request made in the enclosed letter.' Read the rest when you are alone, for it would not be a good idea for anyone else to know about this.

2161 / To Daniel Stiebar Freiburg, 14 May 1529

This is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2128. It was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

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15 William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury. There appears to have been no basis for this fear.

16 Quirinus Talesius was in fact dispatched to England in October, bearing presentation copies of the new Froben Augustine; see Allen Ep 2222:25n.

17 See Ep 1993 n11.

18 Ep 2024:13–16

19 Ep 2115 n4

20 The bearer was a Bruges schoolmaster; see Ep 2193:4. On 27 May, when Schets wrote Ep 2167 to Erasmus, he had not yet received this letter. Schets appears to have responded to it in July in a letter that is no longer extant; see Allen Ep 2243:1–3.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO DANIEL STIEBAR, GREETING

I sent you two letters, my distinguished young friend. The first did not catch up with you in Paris because of the slowness of the courier.[1] I have now learned from a letter of my friend Goclenius that the same fate has befallen the other letter, which I had sent to Brabant.[2] I have been wondering why you left France so quickly and went to Brabant. I am sorry that my homeland has brought you so little luck. At any rate I am glad to know that you have recovered your health. Your aim, I think, was to acquire the wisdom of Ulysses, who knows the ways of many men and their cities,[3] but such knowledge, which is gained by experiencing misfortune, learned men define as 'wretched.'[4] From the teachings of philosophy and from the study of cosmography and history you will gain more true wisdom in a single year (and without running into danger) than Ulysses gathered in more than twenty years, plagued by almost unbelievable perils and disasters; and if Mercury had not armed him against the spells of Circe with the herb 'moly,' he would still be nothing but a pig.[5] No place will ever lack material for the study and practice of virtue, so there is no point in putting oneself in danger. When dangers do arise, that is the time to show what a brave and prudent man you are. But just as it is a foolish soldier who rushes into battle unarmed, so it is perilous to face a stormy sea of troubles, unless you have carefully armed your mind beforehand with the precepts of philosophy.

I hear that you have returned to your homeland,[6] but that you still seem to be turning your gaze elsewhere; so I am reluctant to entrust a longer letter to the winds, especially since I have had such poor luck twice before. Now, since Augustinus Marius is moving to your part of the world to fill the position of preacher in your church,[7] I am taking advantage of the

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1 Ep 2079

2 Not extant. It must have been dated c 22 February (see n14 below) and addressed c/o Goclenius (cf Ep 2128 n2).

3 Horace *Ars poetica* 142, a translation from the opening lines of Homer's *Odyssey*. Erasmus substitutes *novit* 'knows' for Horace's *vidit* 'saw.'

4 Among the 'learned men' Erasmus is probably thinking primarily of Homer, who writes of Ulysses' 'many woes' in *Odyssey* 1.4.

5 Homer's account of the spells of the enchantress Circe is in book 10 of the *Odyssey*.

6 Würzburg in Franconia

7 Augustinus Marius of Ulm (1485–1543), a member of the Basel cathedral chapter, was about to leave Freiburg for Würzburg, where he had just been appointed cathedral preacher. He carried with him a letter to the bishop of Würzburg, Konrad von Thüngen (Ep 2164), as well as the present letter to Stiebar.

availability of this friendly and reliable person to send you a copy of my first letter. I shall send the later one also if I can find it, for the recent move has muddled all my papers, with which, as you know, I am bounteously supplied.

I have left the Rauraci to become a resident of the Breisgau.[8] I was very reluctant to abandon the nest to which I had grown accustomed for so many years. But the experience turned out better than I had expected, especially as regards my health.[9] In departing from Basel I left behind many advantages, and settling into my new accommodation has involved me in no small expense. But the loss of money can be made good, and no price can be put on good health. I am fortunate in this one respect, that I owe nothing to anyone by way of a loan, and if my resources fail, I have, among others, a very wealthy friend in Ferdinand, the illustrious king of Hungary and Bohemia, whose generosity towards me has no limits.[10] He wrote me a flattering letter inviting me to leave Basel lest delay prevent my departure. He added an official document that allowed me to move freely through all his lands and all those of the emperor, and he commended me most warmly to the city council here,[11] which had already of its own accord shown me every courtesy. It has made available to me a quite princely house,[12] and would have followed with welcomes, gifts, banquets, and all other such gestures, had I not written to Glareanus and let it be known that I would rather they dispensed with these traditional courtesies.[13]

In my second letter, I told you about Karel Uutenhove,[14] who has gone to Venice in the company of Andrzej Zebrzydowski.[15] He too is searching for the wisdom of Ulysses, though soon, I suspect, he intends to take a wife.

A volume of my letters is being printed in a fine edition.[16] It will be considerably enlarged. I shall see to it that posterity too will know that the friendship between Erasmus and Stiebar was of no ordinary sort.[17]

Freiburg im Breisgau, 14 May 1529

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8 On the Rauraci, see Ep 2158 n1.
9 See Ep 2151 n1.
10 See Ep 2090 introduction.
11 See Ep 2145:33–4.
12 See Ep 2112 n4.
13 The letter to Glareanus is not extant.
14 Uutenhove (Ep 2093) had left Basel for Italy c 22 February; see Epp 2105–6.
15 Epp 1826, 1958 n1
16 The *Opus epistolarum*. See Ep 2203.
17 He did so by publishing this letter in the volume.

2162 / To Pierre de Mornieu

Freiburg, [14 May] 1529

This is letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, where it is in sequence with Epp 2161 and 2164. On that account, as well as that of similarity of language, Allen assigned the conjectural day- and month-date. The letter is apparently Erasmus' answer to one now lost that was written by Mornieu in response to Ep 2084 (see line 27).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO PIERRE DE MORNIEU, ABBOT OF SAINT-SULPICE, GREETING

I must say that I derive the greatest pleasure from letters sent by such friends as you, and yet I have never considered this kind of friendly communication to be the gauge of a person's good will if I have already seen and experienced the genuineness of his affection. If my friends write, they bring me greater delight; but if they remain silent, it is true that there is less delight, but they are not less dear. And I am not unaware of the great burden of business that presses on you despite your young years. He whose love is constant and is ready to help when need demands is a good enough correspondent.

As for the kindness you showed our friend Albanus[1] – for he told me the whole story from start to finish – you would hardly credit how much that has increased my affection for you. I am sure you will find him grateful and mindful of your kindness. Before this I did not have a very close relationship with him, but now he is beginning to rise in my affections since I see him the recipient of your extraordinary generosity. He paid me a visit in Freiburg and discovered there, as first-time visitors generally do, a scene of restless activity. All he asked of me was that I thank you on his behalf.

I have not yet seen the book he dedicated to you.[2] But I gladly salute your readiness to assist with your favour and generosity all who are devoted to the most noble studies. I am thinking, for example, of Hieronymus,[3] a man born for letters and liberal studies, who is with you at Saint-Sulpice, and to whom, I am told, you are happily bound with a chain of gold.[4] This proves that you are a good man who fosters and supports in others all that is

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1 Albanus Torinus (Ep 2084 n1)

2 An edition of Epiphanius' *De prophetarum vita et interitu*, with a Latin translation by Torinus (Basel: Cratander 1529). See Allen Ep 1777 introduction.

3 Gemuseus; see lines 57–60 below.

4 The phrase is borrowed, with slight alterations, from Horace *Odes* 4.11.24.

noble. It will assure you a bright and lasting fame, not just in this generation but also among those that are to come. It is clear from your letter[5] that you are familiar with the Grecian Muses, an accomplishment that I commend even more strongly. They will add great brilliance and authority to your learning; and such is the quality of your intellect that it can cope with any programme, however varied, to which you put your mind.

It is only too true, as you say in your letter, that the sky over Germany is heavy and cloudy, though there is hardly any place in the world where I see calm weather. I fear these clouds are bringing us a bigger storm. I am deeply sorry about the plight of the burgomaster Meltinger, a man who has often served his city well. It is good to know, however, that he succeeded in slipping away.[6]

I am by no means averse to the thought of France. But everywhere in that land the magpies and jackdaws are allowed the greatest licence, and the same applies to certain Bédaists, whose outrageous behaviour does more harm to the church of Christ than any Lutheran, although they imagine that the burden of sustaining it rests on their shoulders.[7] The future will show that what I am saying is true. I could easily despise the Herostratuses, the Pans, and the Midases,[8] if they had not already taken control of everything and had at their disposal a deadly poison. The poison of the adder is under their lips, their teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword.[9] With these weapons and their numbers they are formidable even to kings. I realize that kings too have a bad reputation, but they are ready to concede to others the right to speak as they think fit, provided they themselves are allowed to act in whatever manner their heart desires.

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5 Not extant; probably Mornieu's answer to Ep 2084

6 See Ep 2112 n17; cf Ep 2158:18–22.

7 The principal Bédaists were Noël Béda himself (Ep 2082 n56) and Pierre Cousturier (Ep 2082 n24).

8 This is an odd collection of names, all of them in the plural in the idiomatic sense of 'creatures like Herostratus,' etc. If Mornieu's letter were extant, one might be in a better position to identify the people to whom Erasmus is referring. Herostratus was an ambitious man who, in search of fame, burned down the temple of Diana at Ephesus. Pan is the god who causes panic. Midas, a king of Lydia, asked Dionysus that everything he touched would become gold. He was also given a set of ass's ears by Apollo when he awarded the palm to Pan in a musical contest with Apollo. Perhaps the names are simply symbolical of people who are violently ambitious, greedy, cause tumult, and have no judgment. That would be a close fit for Erasmus' attitude towards Béda and company.

9 Cf Ep 2136:63–4 with n17.

'Lightning strikes the highest peaks.'[10] To tell you the truth, when you quoted this saying, I couldn't help laughing. There is an old adage about 'making an elephant out of a fly.'[11] You are making a mountain out of a worm, an Apollo out of a cicada.

I am most grateful to your excellent father, and I reciprocate with interest all his good wishes for me. Gemuseus is dear to me for many reasons: first, because he is liked by you, secondly, because he has devoted himself heart and soul to the noblest studies, and then because, in expressing his regard for Erasmus, he reminds me of you, his patron, and of Glareanus, his mentor.[12] May the Lord keep you safe and prosper all your studies.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 1529

2163 / From Alfonso de Valdés Barcelona, 15 May 1529

The autograph rough draft of this letter is in the Real Academia de la Historia in Madrid (MS Est 18 gr 1.5 fol 88). It was first published in Caballero 474–7.

On Valdés, see Ep 2109.

Cordial greetings. The letter that you sent me last year on the eve of Martinmas was delivered today.[1] The fact that letters from your part of the world take so long to reach us – if they reach us at all – makes me inclined to be lazy about writing. I replied recently from Zaragoza to all your other

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10 Horace *Odes* 2.10.11–12. As Allen suggests, Mornieu's intention in quoting this passage seems to have been to imply that it was Erasmus' great eminence that caused him to be attacked by petty enemies.

11 *Adagia* I ix 69

12 Hieronymus Gemuseus of Mulhouse (1505–44) entered the University of Basel in 1522, attaching himself to Henricus Glareanus (Ep 2098 n1). After taking his MA in 1525, he turned to the study of mathematics, science, and medicine. Between 1525 and 1529, while continuing his studies, he was tutor and travelling companion to Pierre de Mornieu. As this letter shows, Erasmus seems to have known Gemuseus well enough to be genuinely pleased by the good wishes from him conveyed by Mornieu. After moving on from Savoy, Gemuseus completed his medical studies in Italy and then, with the help of Bonifacius Amerbach, secured a professorship of physics at Basel, where he taught from c 1535 until his death. He is remembered chiefly for his scholarly publications, especially his major contributions to editions of Galen, Ptolemy, and Aristotle.

2163

1 This letter of 10 November 1528 is not extant. It was probably sent via Schets with Ep 2072.

letters, which you sent through the kind offices of the bishop of Burgos,[2] Frans van der Dilft,[3] and others; and of course I also wrote you from Toledo and Madrid, but whether my letters ever reached you, I do not know.[4] I would send copies, but I am loath to bother you with my dull and rambling compositions.

I wonder that there is so much perfidy and malevolence in the world that somebody has removed a chirograph from my letter.[5] Believe me, I enclosed this document in both my letters. I cannot guess how on earth you got it from Transsilvanus,[6] since I never wrote a word about it to him. You wrote that you were planning to buy books for me, but I do not know where in the wide world you will send them, since I have no more idea than you where we shall be before a month is out. From central Spain we have travelled to a spot where further progress would be awkward, retreat dishonourable, and staying on very difficult.[7] If my people gave me liberty to choose, I would now be somewhere else; I would gladly leave Italy to the Italians and look to my own peace of mind rather than wander through all the regions of the world and (what to my mind is worse) risk my life and my health, to say nothing of the pain we inflict on the regions themselves. Since, however, it seems to be my lot never to get the thing I desire most, that is, peace and quiet, I have no choice but to run wherever destiny calls. The one consolation I can take from the expedition we are now planning is the prospect that some day I may be able to see you in the flesh.

Many people are waiting eagerly for your Augustine.[8] I wrote that the archbishop of Toledo will be greatly pleased if Erasmus dedicates some-

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2 Iñigo López de Mendoza y Zúñiga (d 1535), member of the family of the counts of Miranda, diplomat in the service of Charles V and, since 2 March 1529, bishop of Burgos

3 This letter was probably written c 27 July 1528 and given to Dilft (Ep 1663) to be carried to Spain with Ep 2013.

4 The imperial court, of which Valdés was a member, was at Madrid from 3 August to 9 October 1528; then at Toledo from 15 October to 8 March 1529; and then at Zaragoza from 23 March to 19 April 1529. Of all these letters, only Ep 2109 survives.

5 Erasmus doubtless reported the loss of this document in his letter of 10 November. It is not to be confused with the *syngrapha* for Fonseca's 200 ducats (lines 29–31 below). Cf Ep 2109 n9.

6 It is not clear whether this is a reference to Maximilianus Transsilvanus (Ep 1553) or Martinus Sydonius Transsylvanus (Ep 1904 n1), both of whom had connections with Valdés.

7 The imperial party was in Barcelona, preparing to embark for Italy; cf Epp 2109:7–8, 2167:30–2.

8 Ep 2157

thing to him.[9] I imagine you have received the two hundred ducats about which I wrote to you several times, for the documents have been sent to you – already in a third copy.[10] They were not entrusted to merchants, but were given to others, in particular to the bookseller who has been responsible for faithfully delivering our letters,[11] one from me to you and another from you to me. I would not dedicate anything to the archbishop of Seville.[12] I am delighted your edition of Seneca is seeing the light of day.[13] I know what renown both the book and its author will gain because it has been corrected by Erasmus. The present age owes some men a very great deal, and the future too will owe them much. But who could estimate the debt which not just the present age, or future ages, but also the past owes to you, for you have emended and corrected ancient authors and given them to the world in a clean and correct version. Some authors, perhaps deliberately, would let the work of others perish, so that their own might be received and read more avidly. You, who have written as much as any of the ancients, are so different from these people that, entirely by your own industry and generosity, we see from time to time the forgotten works of others come to life again. By doing so you show clearly how little you envy the glory of others, how little you fear that their fame will dim your own.

The welcome accorded here to your *Ciceronianus* does you the greatest honour;[14] it has been received with glowing praise for your learning and intelligence, and has now been printed a second time.[15] No one here is angry at being passed over, although you named very few Spaniards; for example, I do not know what you had in mind or what you intended when you omitted Luis Vives,[16] a man of uncommon ability and erudition. But this is of no consequence. I do not understand how the work could have caused such a commotion in Paris,[17] since, unless I am mistaken, there are very few there who affect the Ciceronian manner. If this caused a commotion in France, what, I wonder, will be the effect in Italy? On the other hand, Italians have other matters on their minds and seem to care not at all, or very little, about these things. But unless you keep your ears closed to such stupid and petty

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9 Ep 2109:25–7
10 See Epp 2109:27–9, 2153:13–15.
11 Cf Ep 2126:235–8.
12 Alonso Manrique de Lara (Ep 1846); but cf Ep 2198:36–8.
13 Ep 2091
14 On the *Ciceronianus*, see Ep 1948.
15 In the second Froben edition, March 1529
16 See Epp 2008:15–17, 25–6, 2040:14–18.
17 Ep 2021 introduction

criticisms, you will accomplish nothing and torture yourself needlessly. You should sail past all that with blocked ears.[18]

I understand why you are more upset by a few blackguards than by all the commotion stirred up by monks and theologians, for I have lately had the very same experience and in very serious circumstances; it has happened at a time when I am scarcely capable, or have not yet learned, to launch forth from the nest. It is a long story, but I am not worried that it will weary your ears. On the day on which we got the news that the city of Rome had been taken and plundered by our troops,[19] a few friends dined with me, some of whom were happy at the news, others cursed it. They demanded that I state my views on the matter and I promised to write them down, thus hinting that the issue was too complex for a snap judgment and that no one could, or should, make such a judgment. They applauded my caution, but wanted me to pledge myself to do what I promised. I was forced to give my word and I did so. When I came to fulfil my promise, I wrote as a first sketch a dialogue on the capture and plunder of Rome, taking the line that the emperor was not at fault and that the whole responsibility lay instead with the pope, or rather with his advisers.[20] I worked into it many ideas that I had taken from your writings. When I realized that the thing had gone further than I intended, and wishing to escape scurrilous attack from captious critics, I consulted Luiz Coronel, Sancho Carranza, Virués,[21] and other friends of that sort, and asked them if they thought the book should be suppressed or circulated among friends. They read it and enthusiastically urged publication. This I refused to allow, but permitted the piece to be made available only to friends. They liked the book and had it copied out by hand for themselves; it was not published, however, for that I had strenuously opposed. As a result, within a few days it spread through almost the whole of Spain. This little book had won me considerable renown in many quarters, when, lo and behold, Jean Lalemand,[22] first secretary to the emperor, who had conceived (under what baleful influence I do not know) an exceedingly bitter hatred of me, after failing, despite searching everywhere, to find a weapon to destroy me, turned to the

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18 Clearly a reference to the story of Odysseus and the Sirens, which is found in Homer *Odyssey* 12.154–200

19 The sack of Rome by the emperor's mutinous troops in May 1527

20 The *Lactancio*; see Ep 1839 n15.

21 Epp 1274 (Coronel), 1277 n8 (Carranza), 1684 introduction (Alonso Ruis de Virués)

22 Ep 1554

Dialogue.[23] He had never read it, nor would he have been able to understand anything in it if he had. All he had heard was that I was too free in my criticisms of the pope and of the whole papal enterprise. He induced the papal nuncio,[24] who was then staying among us, to accuse me of being a heretic and a Lutheran and to have my book tossed into Vulcan's fire. The nuncio accepted this mission. He approached the emperor and demanded that if he wished to be friends with the pope he should get rid of me along with my book, asserting that in defending the emperor I had served up the errors of Luther to be swallowed by my fellow Spaniards. The emperor, who is not in the habit of placing his confidence in anyone quickly, said he did not wish to make a decision unless it could first be shown to him what errors I had made. When they had none to point to and realized that they were making little progress with the emperor, they canvassed the attitude of the archbishop of Seville.[25] When they had the same response there, they turned to the bishop of Santiago de Compostela,[26] who presides in this country over civil cases, alleging that I had written a libellous book. The malice of these people had become evident, however, and they got the same answer from Compostela as they had obtained from the emperor and Seville, with the result that all their efforts to destroy the book had the opposite effect of increasing its reputation. But you will say, 'What did you do in this affair?' What could I do? Outwardly I laughed, but inwardly I wept for the wickedness and madness of men, and I committed everything to Christ, who knows all my thoughts. Not long afterwards those blackguards paid the price to him for their wickedness. Jean Lalemand was arrested as a traitor and led away from the court.[27] The papal nuncio was seized with a most serious illness and has gone from the land of the living.[28] In this way I, a little man with no defender, offering no reply and no defence, but relying solely on the help of Christ, our Lord and Master, defeated the schemes of

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23 Valdés gives a lengthy account of this attack in a letter of 22 April 1529 to Maximilianus Transsilvanus that is printed in Caballero 432–4.

24 Baldesar Castiglione, of *Book of the Courtier* fame; see Ep 1791 n16.

25 See n12 above.

26 Juan Pardo de Tavera (1472–1545) became bishop of Santiago de Compostela in 1524 and later (1534) succeeded Fonseca at Toledo. By that time, he was already a major figure in the civil administration of the country, having during the 1520s reorganized the royal chancellery at Valladolid and been appointed its president, as well as presiding over several sessions of the Cortes. He subsequently became president of the council of Castile and inquisitor-general.

27 See Ep 2083 n7.

28 Castiglione (n24 above) died in Toledo on 17 February 1529.

these eminent men. I have written this so that you will not think it strange if these people rise up against so great a man as you, when they have formed so dire a plot against me, who am a worm more truly than a man.[29]

Cornelis de Schepper wrote from Zealand to say that two books attacking you have been published in France; one was the work of Luis de Carvajal, a Minorite, the other of Alberto, formerly prince of Carpi. Carvajal's book was first published in our country and received such a poor welcome that it was scarcely off the press when some of your supporters, by way of reply, nailed the work to the public gibbet in the centre of the square,[30] just as scales and other things of the kind are hung up if the authorities find they give false measure. The work certainly does not deserve a reply from any man of sense, much less from an important person like you. I do not know what got into the mind of the prince of Carpi to make him attack you in writing, and I have not seen the book.[31] As if the present age did not have enough dissension with the princes fighting with implacable anger among themselves, these people, in a campaign that is more annoying than effective,[32] do not even spare learning; you would think they do not want any part of the world to be free from trouble! And they are challenging you to enter the arena simply because you seem to contribute to the public good.

I passed on your greetings to your friends: to the chancellor of course,[33] and to Johannes Dantiscus,[34] the Polish diplomat, and to others who I dis-

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29 Ps 22:6 (21:7 Vulgate): 'I am a worm and no man.'

30 Cf Ep 2126:112–13. On Carvajal's book and Erasmus' response, see Epp 2110 n10, 2126. On Schepper, see Ep 1747 n23.

31 On the controversy with Alberto Pio, see Epp 2080, 2118:19–33.

32 The Latin in all printings of this letter is *minori molestia quam fructu*, literally 'with less vexation than profit.' This reading was accepted by Allen without explanation. We have adopted the reading of Gerlo VIII 227 n30, where sense has been restored to the text by emending it to read *maiori molestia*.

33 Gattinara (Epp 1150, 1643)

34 Johannes Dantiscus (1485–1548) studied law and theology at Cracow before entering the service of King Sigismund I of Poland (1507), who soon began to entrust him with important diplomatic missions. From 1524 Dantiscus was ambassador to the imperial court in Spain, which he accompanied on its journey to Italy and Germany in 1529–30, attending both the emperor's coronation in Bologna and the imperial diet at Augsburg. He then went with the court to the Netherlands, where he resided until recalled to Poland in 1532. A congenial courtier as well as a neo-Latin poet of some note, Dantiscus had frequent contact with many friends and acquaintances of Erasmus, though he never met Erasmus himself. Although the two are known to have exchanged

covered were devotees of yours. All the rest of your friends have scattered, Virués to Valladolid, Jacobus a Catena to Burgos,[35] Carranza to Seville, Coronel and Vergara to Toledo, Morillon to Zaragoza,[36] Olivar to Valencia.[37] I understand that all of them are well. You too must try to keep as well as you can, and assure me of your love, which will always be reciprocated. 145

Barcelona, 15 May 1529

2164 / To Konrad von Thüngen Freiburg, 16 May 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. On Bishop Konrad, see Ep 1124.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO KONRAD VON THÜNGEN, BISHOP OF WÜRZBURG, GREETING

Whenever lawyers cannot think of a line of argument in a defence trial, they resort to the *status translativus*, accepting the facts of the case, since these cannot be denied, and shifting responsibility for the crime onto someone else.[1] So when I, a person of no position and a stranger to you, do not hesitate to write on my own initiative to so great a prince as yourself, I put the 5

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friendly letters, almost all of them are lost. The only letter of Erasmus to Dantiscus is Ep 2643 (30 April 1532), the prefatory letter of Erasmus' Latin translation of Basil's *De Spiritu Sancto*. In it he thanks Dantiscus for the gift of a medallion. As for Dantiscus' letters to Erasmus, there is only the unsigned and undated draft of a letter addressed to Erasmus but never sent that Henry de Vocht discovered in Cracow. On the basis of internal evidence, de Vocht assigned authorship to Dantiscus and dated the draft at the second half of October 1531. See *John Dantiscus and his Netherlandish Friends* (Louvain 1961) 104–6.

35 This is the only mention of Jacobus a Catena (Diego de la Cadena) in Erasmus' correspondence or, as far as one knows, anywhere else. He has never been identified.

36 See Ep 2083.

37 See Ep 1791.

2164

1 Greek and Roman rhetoricians distinguished various kinds of argument according to the nature of the point at issue (*status*). In the *status translativus*, the speaker must attempt to change the point at issue by arguing, for example, that a legal case belongs in a different court or (as here) that the charge should be made against a different defendant. See Cicero *De inventione* 1.10 and Quintilian 3.6.

blame for my effrontery on Augustinus Marius,[2] since I cannot avoid the charge of impudence in any other way. He was making arrangements to go to you to serve the church of God under your banner but refused to leave without a letter from me. He painted a most eloquent picture of your mind and character, which no lover of piety could fail to admire and respect. It is rare in these days to see exalted rank combined in equal measure with high learning and integrity of character. But what principally spurred me on to take this liberty was your admirable friendliness and courtesy. On this I warmly congratulate the church of Christ, which tosses on such dangerous waters and is rocked by so many storms of controversy.

This tempest in human affairs, unequalled in its severity, calls for able and skilful pilots. Up to now Christ seems to have fallen asleep.[3] But I hope that he will be roused by the prayers of pious men and will command the sea and the winds, and that in place of these present storms we shall have the calm we long for. On one occasion the disciples nudged the Lord to wake him up; now, I hope, the successors of the apostles will do the same. But the people must flee for refuge to the Lord's mercy, for he rages against us with a just anger; they must change their lives for the better and show themselves worthy that Christ should listen to the cries of pious men. I do not know what has been accomplished so far by the noisy tirades of monks when they address the people, by the articles of the theologians, or by imprisonment, pamphlets, bulls, and burnings. There have been cries aplenty and there still are. But I see few people crying out to Christ. If we will cry to him with a pure heart, asking for nothing but his glory and the salvation of his flock, he will soon wake and will say to the boiling sea, 'Be still,' and there will be a great calm. For he did not permit the storm to blow in order to destroy his own, but to test and purify them and to crown them with a greater glory.

In ancient times men used to forecast a happy turn of events from the flight of birds. I see a happy augury in the fact that in many places we have a new kind of bishop, men who by the piety of their lives and by holy teaching and wise moderation promise a better future. I could not convince myself that anything good would come from the squawking of the crows and magpies. But I think that in the Reverend Father Alonso de Fonseca,

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2 Ep 2161 n7

3 The imagery throughout this section of the letter is taken from Mark 4:36–41 (cf Matt 8:23–7; Luke 8:22–25), where Jesus, asleep in a ship on a stormy lake, is awakened by the terrified disciples and calms the storm.

archbishop of Toledo in Spain,[4] in John, bishop of Rochester in England,[5] and in Christopher, bishop of Augsburg in Germany,[6] we can see portents of a more auspicious time; and in their company your virtues will earn you a place by no means inferior to theirs.

Your Reverence will have in Augustinus Marius a strong and faithful helper in restoring the ruined fortunes of the church. I do not commend him to you, for I know that his best commendation is his own merits and your generosity. Rather I hope and pray that he will be the means of commending me to you. If you think fit to include my poor self in the number of your humble clients, I promise the one thing I can – my good will and my readiness to do you any service. May Christ, our great master, keep your Lordship safe.

Freiburg im Breisgau, on the feast of Pentecost 1529

2165 / To Emiglio de' Migli Freiburg, 17 May 1529

This is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2154 as well as to an earlier letter from Migli that is no longer extant. In both letters, Migli begged Erasmus for a letter that could be included in the prefatory material for his Italian translation of the *Enchiridion*. Although the letter was first published by Erasmus in the *Opus epistolarum*, Allen gave preference to the text published by Migli in 1531 on the ground that it was presumably closer to the letter actually received.

TO THE HONOURABLE EMIGLIO DE' MIGLI OF BRESCIA, MY SPECIAL FRIEND

Cordial greetings. I want you to know, distinguished sir, that both your letters have reached me. This is my reply to both of them, written, as the saying goes, 'with the same oil'[1] – although there was no need of a reply since Maggi is acting as my courier and I believe he will be rushing back to you.[2]

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4 Ep 1748
5 John Fisher (Ep 229)
6 Christoph von Stadion (Ep 2029)

2165
1 Ie with the same expenditure of time and effort; see *Adagia* I iv 62, and cf Epp 2082:251–2, 2141:24. Here the meaning is perhaps 'at one stroke.'
2 On the courier, Vincenzo Maggi, see Ep 2154 n2.

It is not a downright lie when the Dominicans and Franciscans report that I am dead. I have a constant struggle with Death's henchman, the stone[3] – to say nothing about the burdens of old age (which, however, give me no great reason to complain); I also pass over the extraordinary toil that my studies demand and omit any reference to the never-ending battles with so many portentous foes, who attack me now from one side, now from the other. I do not know if this can be called a life. No amount of work would bother me if I did not witness everything in these days plunging into a worse state. I hear the orthodox and the heretics; I hear Catholics and Antichrists. But I do not see Christ anywhere. The world has been in labour long enough. I pray it may give birth to something good with Christ as its midwife. Without this there is no hope. While pharisaism fights against the power of the gospel, paganism is coming back and flourishing. Many hope that this evil can be put to rest by those who were its principal cause. But I fear it will be made worse.

I wish my *Enchiridion* were learned enough to merit your attention or that it were so effective in promoting piety that you will not regret the trouble you took or be worried by the reaction it provokes. The translation into the vernacular in Spain has caused a dreadful uproar from the grackles and magpies.[4] The book would not have held its ground but for the support of some of the leading men and especially of the emperor.

It is not hard to understand why these people are so obsessed with preventing my works from speaking in the vernacular. In every part of the world they fulminate against me, in season and out of season, and convince a lot of people; for naturally in an uncontested case they emerge the winners. But if my books were in the vernacular, their shameless lies would quickly be exposed. Still, there will be less unpleasantness if you omit the preface to Paul Volz[5] and smooth out a few ambiguous expressions that could be used to discredit me; you might also tone down anything that sounds too offensive. We must make allowances for this most defamatory of ages, and do our best to follow Paul's example, for he became 'all things to all men so that he might gain

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3 For Erasmus' most recent attack, see Ep 2084:16–17.

4 See Epp 1581:849–57, 1814:129–41; but cf Ep 1742:183–5.

5 Ep 858, an important statement of Erasmus' views on church and society and one that drew criticism from conservatives in the church. Cf Ep 1581: 858–9.

all.'[6] Moreover, far from wanting to delay publication of the work,[7] I am most keen on having the same done for all my writings, especially those that are less controversial and more likely to encourage piety as, for example, my commentaries on five of the psalms, *A Comparison of the Virgin and the Martyr*, *The Mercy of the Lord*, *Christian Marriage*, *The Christian Widow*, and the Paraphrases.[8] As for me, I would not hesitate to employ a French or a Dutch translator;[9] it is a rare bird, however, who could rise to the challenge in his own language.

All I infer from the encomia that you lavish upon me is that you have a deep affection for me, since you seem so blind in judging my worth. When your work appears, it would please me greatly if you sent me a copy so that I too may learn to speak Italian. I greatly admire Bembo for his piety and for restoring this distinction also to his native Italy, on which in the past he has shed the lustre of his many talents.

I am afraid you may not read this, for I wrote it in a great hurry to let you know, my dearest Emiglio, what warm feelings I have for you. You will learn the rest of our news from Vincenzo, who seems to me a good and honest man. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 17 May 1529

Erasmus of Rotterdam, in his own hand

2166 / From Balthasar Merklin Waldkirch, 19 May 1529

First published as Ep 109 in Förstemann/Günther, this letter is Merklin's reply to Ep 2123. The manuscript was in the Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction).

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6 1 Cor 9: 21–2

7 That is, the translation of the *Enchiridion*

8 Cf Ep 1968:65–8 with n7. *Virginis et martyris comparatio* (Ep 1346) had already been translated into Spanish. On the other works mentioned see Epp 327, 1304, 1427, 1535, 2017 (the psalm commentaries so far published); 1474 (*De immensa Dei misericordia*); 1727 (*Institutio christiani matrimonii*); 2100 (*De vidua christiana*); 710, 916, 956, 1043, 1062, 1112, 1171, 1179, 1181, 1255, 1333, 1381, 1400, 1414 (Paraphrases).

9 Erasmus may have been unaware that a Dutch translation of the *Enchiridion* had appeared at Amsterdam in July 1523 and at Antwerp the following month (*Bibliotheca Belgica* 2 806 nos 1069–70). But he was very well aware that Louis de Berquin had published a French translation in 1525 (*Bibiotheca Belgica* 2 816–17 nos 1081–2); see Ep 1581:846–7.

Cordial greetings. Distinguished sir, the letter which your Reverence sent me through Christoph von Carlowitz reached me at Speyer,[1] and gave me the greatest pleasure. Your Reverence commended this same Christoph to me warmly. I would have been happy to show him every favour and courtesy in my power, but he found me sinking under such a flood of duties and obligations that I was unable to pay him as much attention as I wished. But however little I may have done, there was no lack of good will or eagerness on my part to oblige both him and your Reverence.

Your second letter was brought to me at Waldkirch[2] by my friend Nachtgall, who shares the same house as your Reverence.[3] You wanted him to tell me that if there was anything I would like you to do for me, I should say the word; you also thank me most generously for my good will and affection for you, certainly without any merit on my part. Even if your praises must be attributed more to your generosity than to any service performed by me, yet I shall try hard to ensure that your thanks prove not to be entirely empty and meaningless. Although what I am sending you now consists simply of empty words, a letter unaccompanied by any gift or favour, I shall see to it that when I write again my letter will not reach you bare and unadorned but, making allowances for the modest size of my little fortune, will be delivered with substantial interest, and that all that has been neglected so far under the pressure of circumstances will in future be made up in abundance.

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1 Where he was attending the imperial diet. Carlowitz was also carrying Epp 2121–2.

2 In the Eltztal, c 16 km north-east of Freiburg; the letter is not extant.

3 Ottmar Nachtgall (or Nachtigall) of Strasbourg (Ep 302:16n), the first to teach Greek in that city, left it in 1523 because of his opposition to the Reformation and settled in Augsburg, where he became a canon and preacher at St Maurice's and the foremost spokesman of the Catholic faction. In September 1528, following his denunciation of Luther and the Anabaptists from the pulpit, the city council forbade him to continue preaching. So he moved forthwith to Freiburg, where he became a preacher in the minster and was assigned the ground floor of the house in which Erasmus would be awarded the use of the second floor when he arrived in Freiburg in the following spring (Ep 2112 n4). By 1530 this housing arrangement had produced conflict between Nachtgall and his upstairs neighbour that lasted into 1531, when Nachtgall turned over the keys to the house to Erasmus. Nachtgall's attempts to smooth things over never succeeded in entirely eliminating Erasmus' dislike of him.

I am very happy to know that your move from Basel to Freiburg went so well for you and that it took place without damage to your health, for believe me, there is nothing that we could have wished for more than your safe arrival and your continued health, although, as you say, the move was hard on your purse.[4] However, this is a loss of small importance provided your health, which is the major consideration, remains sound and unimpaired. As for making up the cost of the move, that will be taken care of by him who will not leave without food even the little birds, weak as they are, who know not how to sow or spin.[5] I would like to convince you, Erasmus my kind, good friend, that all I possess is yours and that I hold nothing so precious and hallowed that I would not gladly, indeed spontaneously, part with it for your sake. So from now on think of everything I have as your own. Farewell, good sir and father, the glory of letters, and indeed the half of my soul.[6]

Waldkirch, 19 May 1529

Balthasar, bishop of Malta, etc, ordinary counsellor and vice-chancellor, etc to his Majesty the emperor

To the reverend and eminent Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, prince and restorer of sacred theology and of all good learning, my most generous friend and much loved patron

2167 / From Erasmus Schets Antwerp, 27 May 1529

This letter was first published by Allen from the autograph in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS Scheti epistolae 19). The news of Erasmus' move to Freiburg had clearly not yet reached Schets. Erasmus' reply is Ep 2193.

Cordial greetings. My eminent and most worthy friend, you would hardly believe how badly upset I am at your delay in coming here and at the slow arrival of your letters; in fact I am not just upset, but tormented by the knowledge that you are living in the midst of that awful chaos, which far from being conducive to your peace of mind is most inimical to it. I learned that Karel Uutenhove and several others who used to share your hospitality have scattered in different directions from fear of

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4 Possibly in the second letter (line 9 above)

5 A confused recollection of Matt 6:26, 28 and Luke 12:24, 27

6 So Horace called his good friend Virgil in *Odes* 1.3.8.

the tumult, leaving you behind.[1] I do not know what possessed you to trust yourself to these snares[2] and perils that lie in front of your eyes and before your feet; for the seed that has been sown is certain to produce an even worse harvest, unless God intervenes. Heaven and earth cry out for you to fly to us, yet it seems that all this time you are not even thinking about it. I hear that all good men and true Catholics have left Basel, either openly or in secret. Are you going to stay there alone amid the rioting mobs? Tell me, are you not afraid of the general massacre that the citizens of Basel have planned? Or perhaps you want to be taken for one of them? For this is what people everywhere are thinking about you. Among your good friends here there is no one who does not have the highest regard for you; many of them weep floods of tears at the very mention of your name. I beg you, take thought for your safety and arrange to come here so that you can enjoy the peace and quiet that gods and men agree you are more likely to find here than where you are.

The enclosed packet of letters for you,[3] which I had sent from Ghent several months ago addressed to Karel Uutenhove, was returned to me after he left you. The packet had been opened and personal letters for Karel had been sent on to him in Venice. I am now sending those that are addressed to you along with another letter that I arranged to be picked up from Valdés in Spain in order to assure you that Valdés had in fact received the letter that you asked me to forward to him.[4] The emperor is already prepared for his departure for Italy; he has nothing else on his mind but crossing from Barcelona to Genoa.[5]

Those illustrious ladies who are the rulers of France and of our provinces are about to meet in Cambrai.[6] Since the efforts of men have failed,

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1 Uutenhove had gone off to Italy in February; see Ep 2105:1–7. On the tumult in Basel, see Ep 2097 n1.

2 Schets Latin is often shaky. In this instance, for example, he confuses the word for a painted ceiling (*laquearia*) with that for a noose or snare (*laqueus*). Here and elsewhere in this letter the translation reflects what Schets intended to say rather than what he actually says.

3 One of them was Ep 2082; see Ep 2197:28–32.

4 Cf Ep 2163 n1.

5 See Ep 2109:7–8, 2163:16–26. The imperial party set sail from Barcelona on 28 July and landed in Genoa on 12 August.

6 The 'Ladies' Peace' of Cambrai, so called because it was negotiated by Louise of Savoy, the mother of Francis I, and Margaret of Austria, the aunt of Charles V,

God grant we may have peace through the intervention of these women, and that throughout the world the feminine sex may claim this distinction for themselves, that what a great and mighty pope, great cardinals of the church, the united weight of so many princes, kings, and Catholic dukes could not achieve, these two illustrious matrons by their wiser counsels were able to achieve and bring to a harmonious conclusion! Farewell.

From Antwerp, 27 May 1529

Your most affectionate friend, Erasmus Schets

These additional letters, addressed to you, arrived later from Spain.[7]

To the excellent and most erudite Master Erasmus of Rotterdam, a special friend.

In Basel

2168 / From Viglius Zuichemus

Lyon, May 1529

On Viglius Zuichemus, see Ep 2101.

This letter was first published as Ep 6 in *Viglii ab Aytta Zuichemi Epistolae selectae = Analecta Belgica* 2/1. The surviving manuscript is a late sixteenth-century copy of unknown provenance in the University Library at Ghent (MS 479 page 54).

TO ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM

I was rather reluctant to leave Dôle, most learned Erasmus, because I always hoped, given the short distance that separated me from you, that one day I would have an opportunity to meet you face to face, something I had set my heart on. But somehow my destiny and the plans of my friends always stand in the way of my hopes.[1] While I was still at Dôle, some eager young

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was signed in August 1529. Broadly speaking, the treaty left Charles in firm command of Italy while conceding to Francis the possession of Burgundy. Although it was only a temporary pause in the Hapsburg-Valois wars, which would resume in 1536, the Peace of Cambrai gave Charles a respite in which to have himself crowned emperor by the pope in 1530 and then proceed to Germany, where he hoped to bring an end to the religious divisions that had taken root since his last visit there in 1521.

7 One of them may have been Ep 2109, which contains the news, mentioned here in lines 30–2 above, of the emperor's impending departure for Italy.

2168

1 Viglius would not meet Erasmus until he paid a visit to him in Freiburg in the autumn of 1531.

students sought my assistance (for what that is worth), begging me to introduce them to the elements of jurisprudence.[2] To their entreaties I finally gave way. Since then I have often felt mixed feelings of shame and regret at my temerity, for at my age I should have been a learner, not a teacher, especially since the munificence of my uncle[3] and the generosity of my parents allowed me, as the saying goes, 'to live off my own juice,'[4] and I was free to devote myself to learning without earning an income from teaching. However, some cultivated friends of mine forced my hand by their urgent and importunate appeals. On top of this, the young men themselves put such strong pressure on me that I was compelled to undertake, not what my feeble talents could accomplish, but what they themselves desired.

Having obtained from me what they wanted, they went on to persuade me to accompany them to Avignon so that we could attend the lectures of Doctor Andrea Alciati, a man of the first rank among jurists. Thus in one way and another I was denied the chance I had long hoped for of seeing you and paying you a visit. Yet that old longing still remains so firmly in my heart that the more my hopes fade, the more my desire increases every day. I cannot banish it from my mind, and I pray God that he will long preserve you for my sake so that, even if it comes late, I may some day gain my wish.

When I got to Lyon, I heard from Paolo Cerrato,[5] a most learned and cultivated man, that Alciati had already bidden farewell to Avignon and had been lured away to Bourges by a handsome honorarium from the French king's sister, the queen of Navarre,[6] and had been taken on at a huge salary by the university.[7] The men who had dragged me there, despite their eagerness to join Alciati, deferred to orders from their parents and returned to their previous plan; they reflected that since the war between the emperor

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2 Identified by Allen as perhaps the group of six (including Viglius) who presented six propositions to Andrea Alciati. The propositions, together with Alciati's replies, were printed at the end of his *Ad rescripta principum* (Lyon: S. Gryphius 1532). The six names, as listed by Allen, were 'P. Castellanus (Ep 2213), Franc. Chambardus, Claud. Vulcopius, Viglius, Nic. Regius of Dijon, and Caesar Casatus of Milan.'

3 Bernard Bucho van Aytta; see Ep 2101:33–5.

4 *Adagia* II viii 80

5 Of Paolo Cerrato of Alba (c 1485–1541), who held a doctorate in law from the University of Pavia, little is known. His *De virginitate* had recently been published at Paris (Simon de Colines 1528). There is no indication of what he was doing in Lyon at this time.

6 Margaret of Angoulême (Ep 1615); Alciati (Ep 1250) had left Avignon for Bourges in March; see Ep 2194 n4.

7 An annual salary of six hundred crowns; see Ep 2194:14–16 with n4.

and the French king had not yet been settled,[8] the safer course was to stay in Avignon in the pope's realm rather than take up residence in France. So we continued on the journey we had begun.

But events did not favour our plan, for very soon afterwards we were forced to withdraw to Valence on account of an outbreak of plague.[9] Because of the beauty of the city I would like to have stayed there longer, especially since there was no danger of the plague or of the infectious disease that had run riot there in the preceding year; moreover their teachers of civil law seemed to me very learned.[10] But the German merchants who do business in Lyon, having been informed by us of our departure from Avignon, made inquiries about security in the royal palace; as a result of their investigations they recommended that we follow Alciati to the university of Bourges. We gladly fell in with their suggestion.

My only reason for writing at such length about my doings is to fulfil the obligation to which I bound myself in an earlier letter.[11] I have no reason to conceal any of my affairs from my excellent patron, for I no longer have to excuse myself for my temerity in bothering you so often and so brazenly with my letters. I hope you will continue to forgive my audacity if in this I sometimes overstep the mark. When I finish the journey on which we have embarked, I shall see to it that you have news of Alciati and any other news that I think you would like to have. Farewell, most learned Erasmus.

From Lyon, May 1529

2169 / From Ambrosius Pelargus [Freiburg, 5 June] 1529

This is the first of seven letters in this volume – the others are Epp 2170, 2181–2, 2184–6–that were published after Erasmus' death by Ambrosius Pelargus in his *Bellaria epistolarum Erasmi Rot. et Ambrosii Pelargi vicissim missarum* (Cologne: H. Fuchs 1539). A further 28 letters exchanged between Pelargus and Erasmus in the years 1531–4 are found in the *Bellaria*.

Pelargus dated this letter (line 77) at 'the nones of July,' ie 7 July, which is in conflict with the date of Ep 2186 (29 June). Allen speculated that Pelargus

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8 The war did not end until August 1529, with the conclusion of the 'Ladies' Peace' of Cambrai; see Ep 2167 n6.

9 Cf Ep 2199:19–20.

10 It was in Valence, on 8 May 1529, that Viglius obtained his doctorate in civil and canon law. See his autobiography, *Vita Viglii ab Aytta Zuichemi, ab ipso Viglio scripta sive dictata . . .*; *Analecta Belgica* 1/1 9.

11 Presumably not Ep 2101 but rather one of those, no longer extant, with which he had 'so often bothered' Erasmus in the interval; see lines 50–1 above.

intended to write 'the nones of June,' or 5 June. The confusion of *Iun-* and *Iul-* in the dating of documents was not uncommon.

Little is known of the early life and education of Ambrosius Pelargus (Storch) of Nidda in Hessen (1493–1561). From 1525 until 1529 he was preacher and lecturer in the Dominican house at Basel and in that capacity defended the Catholic views of the Eucharist and of Scripture and tradition against Oecolampadius and others. Fearing for his safety, Pelargus fled to Freiburg in January 1529, several weeks ahead of the general exodus of Catholics in February, during the tumults that accompanied the victory of the Reformation (see Ep 2097 n1). At Freiburg, Pelargus entered the university at the beginning of March and quickly became *baccalaureus biblicus* and *sententiarius*. In August 1534, several small works he had written in defence of Catholic doctrine against Anabaptists and Protestants were published in a volume of *Opuscula* (Cologne: J. Gymnich). By this time he had received his doctorate in theology from the University of Freiburg (July 1533) and had moved with the Dominicans to Trier, where he had a distinguished career as a preacher, professor, and champion of the Catholic cause. In 1546 he was appointed to represent the archbishop of Trier at the Council of Trent, where he played a significant role in the deliberations of the theologians on justification, the sacraments, and the residency requirements for bishops.

This letter, to which Erasmus replied with Ep 2170, marks the beginning of what soon became an amicable exchange in which Pelargus, who had studied classics and knew Greek, offered comments and criticisms on exegetical points that Erasmus appreciated and occasionally solicited. The friendly relations thus established were seriously strained in 1532, when Pelargus concluded that he was the target of a reference, in a letter to Thomas More (Ep 2211), to two monks, one of them a Dominican preacher, who had stirred up an agitation against Erasmus in Basel. By the end of June 1533, however, warm relations had once again been established, despite Erasmus' lingering doubts about Pelargus' good will. In his preface to the *Bellaria* (quoted in Allen's introduction), Pelargus disclaimed any intention of injuring Erasmus' memory by publishing his letters, declared that everything written by Erasmus was worthy of publication, and sought to allay possible suspicion that the letters might be forged. In the latter connection, the survival of the original manuscript of Ep 2184, which differs only insignificantly from Pelargus' published text, is testimony to the integrity of his undertaking.

AMBROSIUS PELARGUS TO HIS FRIEND ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Neither in intellect, nor judgment, nor eloquence, nor in the ability to call to mind the most esoteric details can I in any way be compared to you, most learned Erasmus (you see, I am your admirer but cannot be your imitator); 5

yet, whatever my merits may be, I would not like you to suspect me of insolence or arrogance because I have the effrontery, while still a young man, to pass judgment on your writings and to tally my account against yours. If I exercise this right over you, put it down to Christian charity, which dares all things, and also to the special affection that I feel for you. The more sincere one's love, the more active and energetic it is. Such love never flags, but insists, urges, drives, and prods; it does not allow a friend to forget his duty.

So since I have taken advantage of one or two brief conversations with you to make my way into your friendship, and you with characteristic generosity have invited me to join the circle of your friends, I shall not readily allow myself, as long as I live, to be ungrateful for your kindness to me. I am not sure, however, if there is any other way in which I could show my gratitude so well as by pointing out in a friendly fashion any instances in your writings where you have suffered from an ordinary human lapse. I could easily convince myself that this is the ultimate mark of friendship. Moreover, if you will allow me to say so, there are certainly a few places in your work which, if put to the test and examined (so to speak) under the skin,[1] would seem to call for correction. Some statements have been slapped down on the page rather carelessly and not properly thought out. Some are rash. Some are expressed so obscurely and ambiguously that a clear meaning cannot be dug out of them. Some critics would attribute this to a mind that is uncertain and unsure of itself and would argue that you deliberately practise obfuscation, that is, you express ideas obscurely so as to avoid being caught in some misguided distortion, or to provide yourself with a final means of escape if you should be caught out.

I at any rate cannot bring myself to believe that anything you write or say is inspired by evil or hypocritical thoughts. On the contrary, I am totally convinced that when you go astray it is an aberration caused by a weakness common to all mankind, namely, want of reflection and weariness of body. However this may be, it would be useful to have a clearer idea, not of your attitude when you wrote certain passages, but of the meaning you intended to convey. So if you will accept this as the proper role of friendship, I shall do all I can to demonstrate that I have honourably discharged the duties of a true friend. I have no doubt that this will serve both my

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1 Literally 'scrutinize to the quick.' The image 'cut to the quick' (*resecare ad vivum*) has a meaning in Latin different from that of its English equivalent. Erasmus explains it in *Adagia* II iv 13 as signifying 'the analysis of something with needless precision and pedantry.'

interests and your own as well as being for the general benefit of the scholarly reader. I am confident that we shall always act in a calm and friendly manner; nevertheless it is difficult, especially in an exercise of this kind, to restrain or control oneself at all times so as not to overstep the bounds of an acceptable liberty. I think, therefore, it would be useful if we agreed on a pact of mutual frankness in our exchanges with one another, so that one does not become angry with the other if the indulgence is one-sided. To fail in this way would risk an all-out war and give rise to implacable hostility, a state of affairs that I could illustrate from the recent experience of some people quite close to home. Alternatively, we would have to control our pens so as not to look like gladiators in combat, writing poisonous rather than amicable letters. Just how unbecoming that would be, how at variance with the meaning of our names, would be evident to everyone, provided he was not one of those people who like to give a wicked twist to a name. Your name, Erasmus, comes from your lovable nature; my name, Ambrosius, means sweetness and my surname, Pelargus, implies devotion.[2] Let me, in passing, record my astonishment at the scurrilous effrontery of those who interpret the name of Erasmus in a hurtful way, one giving it as 'Erasinus,'[3] another as 'Erras mus,'[4] and another as something else. It is well these ranting fools don't have a smidgin of Greek, or you would risk their turning you into a field-mouse, from ἔρα 'earth' and μῦς 'mouse,' *eyn Erdmuss* in German.[5]

But back to the point. I hope you will allow me this liberty – and I feel confident you will, for unless I am much mistaken in you, you have a very obliging nature; in return I shall allow you in a similar circumstance to indulge your delightful *parrhesia*.[6] For in this way I hope there will be no room for even a suspicion of hostility when we take up various issues

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2 The name Erasmus derived from the Greek *erasmios*, meaning beloved. Ambrosia in Greek myth is the food of the gods, reputed to be very sweet, and *pelargos* is Greek for 'stork,' whose devotion to its young was legendary.

3 *Asinus* is Latin for 'ass.'

4 *Erras mus* means 'you are wrong, mouse!'

5 The German word for a field-mouse, *Erdmuss* (modern German *Erdmaus*) means literally 'earth mouse.' The Greek word ἔρα [era] is very rare, being found only in the grammarians. In the genitive ('of the earth') the word is spelled 'eras, which, combined with 'mus' (Greek for 'mouse'), accounts for all the letters in Erasmus' name. This clever and amusing play on Erasmus' name must surely be the invention of Pelargus himself.

6 *Parrhesia*, a Greek word, sometimes still used in English without italics, meaning 'frank speaking'

for discussion and debate, either to exercise the mind or to search out the truth. We shall carry on these debates in writing, unless you prefer to meet for discussion in the afternoons. Either way is most satisfactory to me, for I know from experience how wonderfully exhilarating such discussions and arguments are. I shall not require you to give in on any point, nor shall I concede anything to you unless there is a convincing case based on reason or solid argument or on the inviolable witness of Scripture or the holy authority of the Catholic church. However, lovers of truth should be less concerned with winning a victory than defending the truth. Farewell.

From my sweatshop, 7 July 1529[7]

2170 / To Ambrosius Pelargus [Freiburg, June 1529]

First published in Pelargus' *Bellaria* (Ep 2169 introduction), this is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2169. Pelargus' reply to this letter is Ep 2181.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO AMBROSIUS PELARGUS

Cordial greetings. I could hardly find the words, most learned Pelargus, to tell you how fortunate I count myself to have found a theologian of proven good faith with whom I can hold a civilized discussion in seeking out the truth. Throughout my life scarcely anything has brought me as much pleasure as the company and friendship of good men, at any rate those good men who have become especially congenial by their refined learning and agility of mind. By the same token my temperament has always recoiled from those theologians (the word 'mataiologians' nearly slipped out)[1] who are more interested in that old thorny theology and are prone to be severe in their condemnation of a work that they have not just failed to understand but have not even read. One might suppose that it never entered the heads of some of these people to read my work. Yet no one has done more harm to my reputation (or perhaps I should say to their own reputations) than these unconscionable zealots, whose one and only interest is to pummel the truth rather than defend it. I have all the more confidence in you as a critic of my writings (such as they are) because I know, if our common friends are not

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7 On this date, see the introduction.

2170

1 The Greek roots of the word 'theologian' mean 'one who speaks of God.' Erasmus liked to describe scholastic theologians by the rare Greek word *mataiologoi*, meaning literally 'those who speak foolish or useless things.'

deceiving me, that you have read them several times with great care and attention.

You have no need to fear that I shall be offended by your candour. On the contrary, if there are occasions when you point out frankly what changes need to be made, I assure you I shall be grateful. I am the kind of person who can face up to criticism, even criticism from a child. If some of my critics had been as friendly in their comments as they were outspoken – to say nothing of the savagery and bitter hostility of their manner – not only would I have been ready to take back a false move,[2] but I would have been most grateful for their help; for I myself do not deny, in fact I openly admit, that there is more than one kind of error in my writings.

You can have either of the two options you mentioned, my dear Pelargus: if you come upon a passage where you think I have gone astray, you can write and suggest an improvement; or if you wish, you can visit me after lunch, since in any case I need to relax my mind at that hour. I shall be glad to suffer defeat at your hands, provided that what is a glorious victory for you is helpful and beneficial to me. Farewell.

2171 / To Leonhard Rebhan Freiburg, 6 June 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Leonhard Rebhan of Ingolstadt (documented 1506–30) took his BA at Basel in 1522, by which time he was already a canon of St Peter's church and the chapter's preacher. In 1526–7 he was rector of the university, an office often held by people who were not members of the faculty. In the meantime, he had emerged as a public opponent of the reformers. This letter, which is the only reference to Rebhan in Erasmus' correspondence, indicates that he may have been contemplating a move to Freiburg.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO LEONHARD REBHAN, GREETING

Ludwig Baer,[1] my most respected mentor and patron, who has told me much about your kindly feelings towards me and your readiness to help, sent me his greetings through you and asked me in turn to write a word or two

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2 *Adagia* I v 55, a proverb derived from a board game like chess, signifying to change one's course or correct an error

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1 Baer (Ep 2087) was provost of St Peter's church.

of greeting to you. That I do most gladly, not just because he asked me – and he is a man to whom I cannot, and should not, refuse anything – but also because your own warm nature deserves my affection in return, since you took the initiative in inviting our friendship. If you come here, far from receiving you reluctantly, I shall give you as much of myself as you want. Farewell.

Freiburg, 6 June 1529

2172 / To Hubertus Barlandus

Freiburg, 8 June 1529

On Hubertus Barlandus, see Ep 2081.

In 1524, Erasmus' despised Spanish critic Diego López Zúñiga (Ep 1260 n36) published at Rome a pamphlet (see n1) in which he indignantly rejected Erasmus' claim that the text of the Latin Vulgate contained many grammatical solecisms (see n2). At the time, Erasmus considered Zúñiga's little book too insignificant to merit anything more than mockery in a private letter (Ep 1466:38–53). But when his copy of it emerged from his belongings as he sorted them out after his move to Freiburg, he decided to dash off a reply. Cast in the form of a letter that is in part a response to Ep 2081, the work was first published in the *Opus epistolarum.* But in the Basel *Opera* of 1540 (IX 326–33) as well as in LB (IX 391–400) it was printed with the *Apologiae*, under the title *Epistola apologetica adversus Stunicam*, rather than with the letters. The entire work, translated and annotated by Alec Dalzell, will appear in CWE 74. We have followed Allen's example by giving here only the opening and concluding passages of the work, which are the truly epistolary portions of it. Professor Dalzell's notes for his translation of the complete work have here been revised to suit the context of the Correspondence volumes.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HUBERTUS BARLANDUS, PHYSICIAN, GREETING

If you want something to amuse you, my dearest Hubertus, here it is! Zúñiga, who appears to be playing the role of the complete buffoon at Rome, published a little book some time ago.[1] I happened upon it at Freiburg when I was going through my belongings, which had been thrown into disarray by the move. Having a little unaccustomed leisure, I skimmed through the

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1 *Assertio ecclesiasticae translationis novi testamenti a soloecismis quos illi Erasmus Roterodamus impegerat* (Rome n pr 1524)

book; in it Zúñiga absolves the Old Translator of the charge of making grammatical errors and even goes so far as to assert that all his translations are couched in fine and elegant Latin.[2]

Isn't that a magnificent proclamation! To bolster his case he uses arguments that are patently false and some that are highly controversial. It is obvious nonsense to claim, as he does in the preface, that like the jackdaw in Aesop,[3] I ransacked the commentaries of Lorenzo Valla and, suppressing the name of the author, offered another man's work as my own. In fact, it was I who took the initiative and, by my own efforts and at my own expense, arranged for the publication of Valla's commentaries in Paris.[4] Secondly, there are numerous points in my work that Lorenzo never touched. Finally, in the work itself I often cite Valla by name. Did he really expect me to mention Lorenzo Valla in every instance, however trivial, especially when the book was available? Moreover, to hold that the present Vulgate is the text that St Jerome corrected at the request of Damasus is so debatable that it could be counted a manifest blunder.[5]

So much for the promises of his prologue; now for his triumphant conclusion! He boasts that nothing is more satisfying than to expose to the

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2 The 'Old Translator' is the translator of the Vulgate, whom Erasmus always differentiated from Jerome (cf n5 below). The charge that the Translator was guilty of grammatical errors had been advanced by Erasmus in his *Soloecismi per interpretem admissi manifestarii et inexcusabiles e plurimis pauci decerpti*, which first appeared in 1519 as one of the prefaces to the second edition of the New Testament and reappeared in the third and fourth editions (1522, 1527). See LB IX *5 recto–verso.

3 The jackdaw is proverbial for thievery. In Aesop's fables (1.3) a jackdaw dresses himself in stolen peacock feathers; the peacocks attack him and pluck out his borrowed plumes; cf *Adagia* III vi 91.

4 The reference is to Erasmus' frequent use in his annotations of Valla's notes on the New Testament (*Collatio Novi Testamenti*), which he had discovered in an abbey near Louvain. Erasmus edited and published these in 1505 with the title: *Laurentii Vallensis viri tam Graecae quam Latinae linguae peritissimi in Latinam Novi Testmenti interpretationem ex collatione Graecorum exemplarium adnotationes apprime utiles* (Paris: Josse Bade); see Ep 182.

5 In about AD 382, Pope Damasus I commissioned Jerome to revise the Old Latin version of the New Testament in the light of Greek texts. Erasmus held that the texts of the Vulgate New Testament current in his time did not faithfully represent Jerome's work; see the *Apologia* to his translation of the New Testament, LB VI **2 recto: 'It is uncontested among scholars that this edition of the New Testament [ie the Vulgate] is not Jerome's as it was corrected by him.' Most modern biblical scholars would agree that over centuries of transmission Jerome's revision had been much corrupted by scribal error and editorial

whole world the ignorance and illiteracy of someone to whom many people previously attributed some degree of knowledge. He often preens himself on his superiority over Erasmus, not just in sacred, but also in profane letters, in which, he says, I have a high opinion of myself. How easy it is to be eloquent when you allow yourself to invent anything that takes your fancy! But I never boasted any particular skill in either sacred or profane letters. If Zúñiga claims such distinction, let him take pleasure in his own estimation – I shall not object. However, he need not be too satisfied with his victory, for there are more than ten thousand men alive today to whom I gladly yield the palm[6] in every branch of learning.

I wish Zúñiga were as erudite as he claims to be. Is there anything sillier than to consider a man more learned simply because he can pick holes in another man's work, especially in a work that covers a varied field? I would not consider myself fit to hold a chamber pot to Ermolao Barbaro,[7] if he were alive today, and yet there is much in his writings that I could reasonably object to. Niccolò Leoniceno criticized certain points in Pliny;[8] does that automatically make him a better scholar? In certain passages I take issue with St Augustine, Ambrose, and Thomas, and not without justification; does that make me more learned than they? Aulus Gellius pointed out a memory lapse in Marcus Cicero.[9] According to Augustine grammarians found solecisms in the best writings of the orators.[10] I too can show you several errors that I have commented on in Cyprian, Hilary, Ambrose, and Jerome. A cobbler found something amiss in a painting of

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malfeasance. See Bruce M. Metzger and Bart D. Ehrman *The Text of the New Testament: Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration* 4th ed (New York and Oxford 2005) 105–6.

6 The Latin is *herbam porrigo*, literally 'proffer grass'; for this proverbial expression see *Adagia* I ix 78.

7 For '... hold a chamber pot to' see *Adagia* I v 94. Ermolao Barbaro, 1453/4–1493, was a distinguished Venetian diplomat and scholar, best remembered for his brilliant corrections in the text of the elder Pliny. Erasmus admired him, but mentions elsewhere that he was not infallible; see Epp 1341A:553–7, 1482:54.

8 Niccolò Leoniceno of Vicenza, 1428–1524, distinguished scholar and physician, was the author of *De Plinii et aliorum erroribus in medicina* (Ferrara: L. de Rossi and A. de Grassis 1492).

9 Gellius (15.18) records a mistake made by Nepos in his biography of Cicero, not by Cicero himself. There is no reference in Gellius to a lapse on Cicero's part.

10 Augustine *De ordine* 2.17.15. There is an interesting discussion of solecisms in translation at *De doctrina christiana* 2.13.19.

Apelles;[11] will he now boast of being a better painter than Apelles? Surely everyone can see how stupid this is – and it would still be stupid even if he had found a serious and embarrassing lapse.

Now consider the trivial achievements for which Zúñiga celebrates such splendid triumphs! He stirs up a storm over a wrongly numbered chapter,[12] caused perhaps by the carelessness of the printers – for this is how most errors arise. But suppose I was at fault, either through lapse of memory or a slip of the pen, why should Zúñiga congratulate himself on a service that is often performed for me by my secretaries and amanuenses? It is difficult to write a volume of annotations. Nothing, on the other hand, is easier than to play the role of Momus in a long work and point to some blemish that has passed unnoticed.[13] Then, if he has set out to prove the Translator innocent of any faults of language, why does he ignore so many passages criticized by me?[14] Is it not madness to try desperately to rid Scripture of the very qualities that the worthiest of men claim to be the glory of Scripture, that it is 'not in the persuasive words of human wisdom' etc?[15] And the writer of books of this sort accuses me of obtuseness! I am not in the least offended by the charge – though it amuses me that it is made by Zúñiga. But not to delay you any longer, I shall say a word or two about each of the passages in turn.

Now tell me, isn't this a bold and brilliant defence of the Translator and the apostles! Now that the task has been successfully accomplished, all that remains for Zúñiga to do is to sing his song of triumph. He does this with all due seriousness, saying in his usual lying manner that Erasmus neglects the mysteries of Scripture and is interested only in elegance of style; that he does not spare the apostles and is even ready to correct their language; that he decked out his translation of the New Testament with the meretricious ornaments of style, often abandoning the Greek text and failing to observe

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11 Apelles was the most celebrated of the Greek painters. For the cobbler's criticism see Pliny *Naturalis historia* 35.85, cited in *Adagia* I vi 16.

12 In the *Assertio* (C 4 verso), Zúñiga criticized Erasmus for citing Acts 8:7 as Acts 7:7 in the *Soloecismi*. The error was corrected in the 1527 edition and in LB VI *5 verso.

13 Momus is the traditional Greek prototype of the carping critic, first mentioned in the *Theogony* of Hesiod (line 214).

14 That is, criticized in his Annotations. In the title of the *Soloecismi* (see n2 above) Erasmus stressed that the problems discussed in it were only a few selected from many.

15 1 Cor 2:4: 'And my speech and my preaching was not in the persuasive words of human wisdom, but in shewing of the Spirit and power' (Douay).

proper Latin usage. And he promises more of the same sort – several additional volumes of elegant annotations. Presumably, he is writing for the benefit of scholars, so that the whole world, on reading the writings of Zúñiga, will know that there existed a certain López, a man divinely inspired, who demonstrated with the most brilliant arguments that Erasmus knew nothing about language. And so henceforth everyone will venerate the name of Zúñiga and revere him as a god.[16] When he is at full gallop in his invective, no one is more eloquent than Zúñiga. But when he gets down to the subject under discussion and must grapple with the issue at close quarters,[17] this little book shows what a lightweight he is. And yet the Dominicans have had rubbish like this published at Rome,[18] in spite of edicts issued by the pope and the cardinals.[19]

You will say, 'Why are you sending me such piffling stuff?' My answer is that I only wanted to make you laugh; for I know what a fine sense of humour you have. If that happens, I have hit my target.[20] And Zúñiga too has hit his target – for he is the talk of the town. That is the one thing he wanted. And this is the Zúñiga whom the great Béda proclaimed a consummate theologian,[21] although all he claims for himself is that he is a second-rate theologian!

It was, I think, in March that you left the book of *Epistolae medicinales*[22] at Strasbourg with instructions that it be forwarded to me; it was delivered

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16 The Latin text puns on *nomen* and *numen*: 'venerate the name (*nomen*) as a divinity (*numen*).'

17 *Adagia* v ii 15 (end), and cf i iv 29.

18 Erasmus believed that the Dominicans at Rome had encouraged Zúñiga's campaign against him and had assisted the Spanish scholar in publishing his polemical works; see, for example, Ep 1341A:878, where 'certain monks' are said to have published Zúñiga's *Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi* (Rome: A. Bladus 1522).

19 Popes and cardinals had banned not only the printing and sale of the *Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi* (see preceding note) but also the publication of further attacks on Erasmus by Zúñiga. For Pope Leo X, see Ep 1213:35–40, and for Clement VII, see Epp 1431:13–14, 1433:19–20, 1488:18–20. For the cardinals, see Ep 1302:68–71, 1305:6–9, and 'The Vergara-Zúñiga Correspondence' CWE 8 346:10–11. See also Ep 1581:206–11.

20 *Adagia* I x 30

21 As far as can be determined, the highest praise Béda ever bestowed on Zúñiga was that he was 'neither ignorant nor stupid and inarticulate' and that a good deal of what he said in criticism of Erasmus 'was true and to the point.' See Ep 1579:113–16.

22 Barlandus edited Giovanni Manardo's *Medicinales epistolae* (Strasbourg: J Schott 1529).

at Freiburg on 13 June. What remarkable dispatch! I do not know if you wrote from Frankfurt, but no letter has reached me. How often, my dear Hubertus, have I cursed that 'fifth essence'[23] of yours, which robbed me of your sweet company after so short a time. I shall bear the loss more easily if you succeed in what you have set your heart on. This is the one thing missing to complete the cycle of your education; all the rest you have already completed successfully. So far you have been sowing the seed, now it is time to gather a rich harvest. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 8 June 1529

2173 / To Piotr Tomicki

Freiburg, 8 June 1529

This is the first of a group of letters (Epp 2173–8) dispatched to Poland at this time. The manuscript of this letter, which was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*, is in the Zamoyski Collection of the Polish National Library at Warsaw (MS BN BOZ 2053 vol 10 fols 99–101 verso). It is possible that the *epistolium* referred to in Allen Ep 2351 was Tomicki's answer to this letter.

Piotr Tomicki, bishop of Cracow (Epp 1919, 1953), was the dedicatee of the new edition of Seneca (see line 2).

Cordial greetings. I received the letter that your Excellency wrote on 20 April.[1] I understand from it that neither my last letter[2] nor the Seneca[3] had reached you, though I suppose that they have reached you by now. I entrusted them to two couriers, one at the Frankfurt fair, the other about to leave here for Cracow by way of Vienna.[4] I could hardly say how much you have bound me to you by the great kindness you showed to my friend Antonin through your constant attendance on him during his wretched illness.[5] May you receive your reward from him who compensates all good men, and with interest, for every generous act! Your kindness gives me reason to feel confident that you will continue your favour towards me. I am not asking to

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23 For this concept of 'fifth essence' or 'fifth element' in philosophy see Ep 225:12n. In Ep 2081 Barlandus curses his study of the 'fifth element' for the trouble and expense it caused him.

2173

1 Not extant
2 Ep 2035
3 Ep 2091
4 Possibly Felix Rex (Polyphemus), who went to Vienna at about that time on his way to Hungary; see Ep 2130:85–8, 123.
5 See Ep 2176.

be praised for my gratitude; it is enough if in your judgment I have escaped the stigma of ingratitude.

Your grand-nephew set off for Paris just before last winter without any advice, for or against, from me.[6] In fact he had already sent on his baggage by coach before he consulted me. I had long guessed, however, that he was planning this or something similar. The experience will have given him some added sophistication of manner, for he paid his respects to the king and met with several learned men.[7] He returned to us with the swallows, intending to resume his familiar place in my household. But when a great upheaval seemed imminent here, he chose to set out for Venice, having by chance found a suitable companion for the journey, someone with whom he had shared a table in my house.[8] I do not doubt that he has arrived there safely. I hope that what he has chosen to do will turn out to be the better course. I would never have denied him anything that lay within my power.

In April we moved bag and baggage to Freiburg im Breisgau, a town that is in Ferdinand's jurisdiction. The current state of affairs forced the move, and there was the additional encouragement of a kind invitation from his Majesty King Ferdinand. The change of nest turned out better than I had expected, and I find the weather here much more agreeable to my constitution.[9] I think it safer to stay here for a while unless, as I sadly fear, the sudden onset of war should throw everything into confusion. Already there is a rumour that the citizens of Zürich have taken up arms. That part of Switzerland which does not wish to change the old religion is said to have entered into a pact with King Ferdinand.[10]

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6 The grand-nephew, Andrzej Zebrzydowski (Ep 1958 n1), had spent several months in Erasmus' household before setting off for Paris in September 1528; see Epp 2052, 2078.

7 Cf Ep 2201:21–3.

8 He departed for Italy in February 1529 in the company of Karel Uutenhove; see Epp 2161:50–1, 2201:28–32.

9 See Ep 2151 n1.

10 Events in Switzerland were indeed moving rapidly in the direction of war between the Protestant and the Catholic cantons. By January 1529, Zürich had succeeded in putting together an alliance aimed at the evangelization of all Switzerland. Known as the Christian Federation (*das Christliche Burgrecht*), its members included Zürich and Bern (the two most powerful cantons in the Confederation), as well as the German city of Constance. Basel joined the Federation in March 1529. Meanwhile, the five Forest Cantons, which were the solid core of Catholic Switzerland – Luzern (Lucerne), Uri, Schwyz, Unterwalden, and Zug – knowing that by themselves they were no match militarily for the Christian Federation, concluded on 22 April 1529 a

Come, come, my distinguished friend, do you think I could change my feelings for you? Were I to do so, I would be a man more brutish than any brute beast. I shall change my feelings, but for the better, if that were possible. I pray your Highness may long be preserved to serve both your own kingdom and the Christian church.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 8 June 1529

Your friend, Erasmus of Rotterdam (I signed this with my own hand.)

I am told that when he is with you, George, who delivered your letter, boasts of being Erasmus' servant in the hope of wheedling some money out of you.[11] When he returns here, he begs from me. If I met him in the street, I would hardly recognize him and he would not feel obliged to remove his cap – that is how much he is a servant of mine! He is as barefaced as they come. I don't begrudge him your generosity. But I could not let you remain in the dark any longer.

To the very reverend Piotr Tomicki, bishop of Cracow and vice-chancellor of the kingdom of Poland. In Cracow

2174 / To Andrzej Krzycki

Freiburg, 8 June 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum.* On Krzycki, high-ranking clergyman, accomplished Latin poet, and influential adviser to King Sigismund I of Poland, see Epp 1629, 2030.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO ANDRZEJ KRZYCKI, BISHOP OF PŁOCK, GREETING

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'Christian Alliance' with Ferdinand of Austria. War, deliberately fomented by Zürich, broke out in the first week of June. Because Austria failed to come to the aid of her allies and Bern would not support Zürich's most ambitious war aims, an inconclusive peace was concluded at Kappel on 25 June, before any actual fighting had taken place. Continued provocation on both sides would lead to the Second Kappel War (1531), in which Zürich would be defeated and Zwingli would be killed, and after which Switzerland would be the first country to settle its religious differences by accepting the principle later formulated as *cuius regio eius religio*, ie the right of a government to determine which religion could be exercised publicly in its territory.

11 Also mentioned by name in Epp 1915:57, 1916:6, as well as by implication in Ep 1895:32 and in 2033:22–4. In 1527 and again in 1529, he carried letters to Basel from Erasmus' Polish friends. While in Basel he worked for a time at the Froben press, complained of his treatment there, and tried to extort money from Erasmus; see Ep 2033:24–6.

My lord bishop, I believe I sent you two letters last autumn, though almost identical in content.[1] I wrote another letter during this spring fair, which I imagine has been delivered by now.[2] Things, I hope, are going well with Zebrzydowski. You will get news of him from my letter to the bishop of Cracow.[3]

What is this I hear? Are you people saying that Erasmus has died again?[4] What unheard-of cruelty to kill off one poor man several times – the Jews put Christ to death only once! The truth is that after I moved to Freiburg I began to regain some of my strength. I find the climate very mild, something I did not expect.[5] I am not surprised that you despise the vipers who are attacking you, for your virtue and dignity have placed you beyond the range of their ill will. I, on the other hand, am a poor creature that crawls on the ground, whom fleas and bugs are not afraid to bite.

The illustrious king Sigismund has bound me so completely to himself by his virtues and his ready kindness that nothing would please me more than to have an opportunity of obliging him in some way.[6] I am very worried by events in Hungary[7] – I would be even more distressed if I saw any place in the world that was free from disaster. There was a proposal at the Diet of Speyer to collect funds to help King Ferdinand.[8] The ears of Germany, however, become astonishingly deaf when any mention is made of giving. While each looks on in peace and comfort at the misfortunes of others, the fire spreads everywhere. But I have good hopes that the divine favour will not fail so pious a king as Ferdinand.

Do not worry yourself about the gift.[9] It is enough for me to know how things stand. Your generosity can make me richer, but it cannot make me more attached or more devoted to you.

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2174

1 Ep 2030 was one of them.
2 It is not extant.
3 Ep 2173
4 See Ep 2144 n1.
5 See Ep 2151 n1.
6 See Epp 1952, 2034.
7 Things were not going well for King Ferdinand in Hungary; see Ep 2090 n2.
8 At the diet (Ep 2107 n1) the evangelical estates that protested against the hostile recess and refused to sign it thereby refused to pay the taxes that the majority had approved for the defence of the eastern boundaries of the Empire (where Ferdinand's hereditary dominions were located) against the advancing Turks.
9 See Epp 2030 n4, 2201:100–1. The bishop eventually sent a ruby ring (Allen Epp 2351:89–90, 2375:16–18), which is listed in the 1534 inventory of Erasmus' valuables; see Major 38–9.

Here is my letter for you, a doubly graceless thing – that is to say, it is short and it lacks polish. The reason is that the courier is quite unreliable.[10] So the prospects of its reaching you are not great. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 8 June 1527

2175 / To Justus Decius

Freiburg, 8 June 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Justus Lodovicus Decius (Ep 1341A n210) was secretary to King Sigismund I of Poland and a patron of humanist scholars.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JODOCUS JUSTUS, SECRETARY TO KING SIGISMUND, GREETING

This courier is so unreliable that it would be better to have entrusted absolutely nothing to him.[1] The Augustine is finished very satisfactorily and will be out at the next fair.[2]

I see that piety is very important to you, which makes you very dear to me, and you live up to the expectations of your name.[3] Luther's angry diatribes against our side are truer than I would wish. 'The freedom of the will,' 'good works and merits,' and similar subjects are matters that could be discussed among learned men with benefit to the cause of piety, but such discussions would have to be free of dogmatism, the enemy of truth, and of animosity, which blinds all judgment. In my opinion, the things that Luther commends come quite close to the vigour of the gospel, if only they were treated temperately. But bitter sallies against images contribute very little to piety and much to division.[4] I do not see why the mass had to be

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10 The courier is several times mentioned in the letters to Poland but never named; See Epp 2175:1, 2176:73, 2178:6, 2201:4.

2175

1 See Ep 2174 n10.

2 Ep 2157

3 Justus means 'righteous.'

4 Luther himself and Lutherans in general had little problem with images in churches and were inclined to be harsh in their criticism of iconoclasm; see eg Ep 1496 n36. 'Cleansing the Lord's temple of graven images' was a preoccupation of Zwinglians and (later) of Calvinists (as well as of Anabaptists and other radicals). But Erasmus tended to use 'Lutheran' as the catch-all label for all the reformers and their followers, and at this point he was still reeling from the shock of the violent iconoclasm that had taken place in Basel in January–February 1529 (Ep 2097 n1).

banned totally, even if what Oecolampadius teaches were true;[5] for neither the body nor the soul of Christ is accorded the true adoration that is called *latria*:[6] what is adored is his divine nature, and that is always present.[7]

But, they say, this is where the common people fall into error. Nothing is simpler than to teach the people that absolutely no created thing should receive that true adoration, the *latria.* Besides, no one can be certain that the host has been properly consecrated except the officiant alone. But a silent and uninterrupted state of adoration frees the worshipper from the danger of idolatry. If I were not persuaded by the strong consensus of the church, I could throw my vote to Oecolampadius.[8] As it is, however, I abide by the doctrine handed down by the church, the interpreter of Scripture. As a matter of fact, I do not find any place in Holy Scripture which clearly establishes that the apostles consecrated bread and wine to become the flesh and blood of the Lord.[9] I am very happy that you support the same position; and you are taking thought for your salvation.

So much for the present. I shall write at greater length later. Farewell, best of friends.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 8 June 1529

2176 / To Jan Antonin Freiburg, 9 June 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Jan Antonin (Ep 1602) was a physician who in 1524 had spent several months in Basel, where he became a fast friend of Erasmus. Back in Poland, he became the personal physician of both Bishop Tomicki (Ep 2173) and King Sigismund.

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5 Ie his denial of the Real Presence of the body and blood of Christ in the bread and wine of the Eucharist

6 Catholic theology distinguishes between the 'worship' or 'adoration' (*latria*) owed to God and the 'veneration' (*dulia*) owed holy things or persons (saints). What Erasmus is here talking about are Christ's body and his rational soul, which together constitute his human nature. Since that human nature is something created, offering it *latria* would constitute *idolatria*.

7 Which is to say that it can be adored even if the body and blood of Christ are not physically present.

8 See Ep 2147:40–2.

9 In other words, if one were guided by Scripture alone and not bound by the consensus of the church, one could reasonably conclude with Oecolampadius that the Eucharist was simply a memorial meal and that the body and blood of Christ are not truly present in the bread and wine.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JAN ANTONIN, PHYSICIAN, GREETING

Because of my deep affection for you, my dearest Antonin, I was not just sorry about your illness, but greatly distressed. Your friends kept writing that the suffering was of such a kind that death would have been preferable.[1] The less hope there was for your recovery, the more inconsolable my grief. I did the one thing I could: I prayed most earnestly to the supreme physician that he would show his mercy to you, for he is able to recall to life even those who are already in the grave.

Several people have suffered excruciatingly and over a long period from this same malady, and some have died. Some members of Froben's household recovered unexpectedly, although the medical profession were no help.[2] Richard Pace, a man who enjoyed perpetual good health and deserved to be immortal, was seized by a similar illness in Italy. When the doctors had given him up, he returned to his native Britain and after a long interval recovered completely; his recovery brought me the greater joy because it was so unexpected.[3]

I myself have not been entirely free from this scourge. From time to time I have felt, not an excruciating pain, but some discomfort around the navel, though it was eased by a movement of the bowels. At times the plague danced all around our house. Clearly, as Virgil says, 'Ucalegon was on fire next door,'[4] and my house was in danger because the neighbouring wall had gone up in flames. But with God's protection no one in my household was affected.

It was fortunate for you that the doctors deserted you when your life was despaired of, for since you were deprived of human help, you had to commit yourself totally to him who alone smites and heals, ends a life and restores it. It is a pious thought of yours to attribute your illness to your sins, for no mortal man is free from every fault. But the Lord does not always inflict misfortunes like yours as a punishment for sin; he often uses such means to test the faith and charity of his people. If he offers his friends a chance to show their piety, it is to award them with a more glorious crown,

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2176

1 See Epp 1953:19–20, 1958:8–9, 2011:10–22.

2 Epp 2031:24–6, 2033:73–5

3 See Epp 1955 introduction, 2031:10–14, 2033:66–9.

4 In his description of the fall and burning of Troy in Virgil's *Aeneid*, Aeneas tells how the fire reached the house of his neighbour Ucalegon (2.311–12). The phrase 'Ucalegon our neighbour is on fire' became proverbial for imminent danger; cf Horace *Epistles* 1.18.84 and Juvenal *Satires* 3.198–202.

or to teach others the lesson that whoever seeks the help of the Lord in the fullness of faith need never despair in any kind of affliction. Jonah cried out from the belly of the whale and was restored to the light of day. Just when there is least hope of human aid, salvation from the Lord is closest at hand. When Jonah was rescued, he celebrated the Lord's mercy in song.[5] You too reveal your godly mind when you refuse to be silent about the wonderful mercy of your Saviour towards you. He has been justified in his words;[6] he has fulfilled what he promised, for he said through Joel the prophet, 'Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered';[7] and he spoke through the mouth of the psalmist, 'He shall call upon me and I shall answer him. I will be with him in trouble: I will deliver him and honour him.'[8]

So, my dearest Antonin, we venerate the Lord's great mercy towards you and we give thanks to him, for he has restored to us a friend more precious than life, and in saving you has saved us also, who shared your peril.

We love the reverend bishop of Cracow for his constant kindness to you,[9] so much so that if he had presented me with a rich living, I would feel less obliged to him than I do as a result of his devoted attention to you. What a man he is, born to bring help to everyone, both in his private and his public role! May the Lord, who rewards every pious act, grant him a recompense worthy of his merits; may he also reward your wife with an abundance of joy for the troubles she has borne, for she could not be torn from her husband's side by a disease that is more cruel than death! From now on may you be easy in your mind, dearest of friends! With God's help the storm has passed: through his kindness a happy calm will follow. Only you must banish all troubling worries and all unnecessary and immoderate cares until your strength regains its former vigour.

We read that some people who have been devastated by grief have immediately expired on being presented with happy news. I would have risked such a fate, had not Johann Henckel written some time before and showed me there was hope for your recovery;[10] and then our friend Justus told me that you were completely free of the disease, though you had not

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5 See Jonah 2, where Jonah's 'song' precedes his rescue.
6 Cf Rom 3:4; Ps 51:4 (50:6 Vulgate).
7 Joel 2:32
8 Ps 91:15 (90:15 Vulgate)
9 Ep 2173:5–7
10 Not in Ep 2011:10–22, but possibly in one of the letters mentioned in Ep 2110:1.

yet recovered your full strength.[11] May the Lord, who has brought you back to life, strengthen you by his power and restore you to full health in body and mind! Please free me of all anxiety about you, my dearest Antonin.

A great fire raged through Basel in the middle of the winter; we saw armed bands rushing through the streets. But no one was injured and no one's house was violated. It was only against the statues and pictures of the saints that they vented their wrath, not stopping before total destruction.[12]

If I have some free time, I shall reply to the letter from the bishop of Szerém,[13] although this present courier is not planning to go to Cracow.[14] May the Lord Jesus protect you, my dear, dear friend, and your beloved wife.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 9 June 1529

2177 / To Krzysztof Szydłowiecki

Freiburg, 9 June 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

Krzysztof Szydłowiecki (Epp 1593, 1752, 1820, 2032) was grand chancellor of Poland and a lavish patron of art and literature.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO KRZYSZTOF OF SZYDŁOWIEC, GREETING

Although the outcome does not do justice to your efforts, excellent sir, yet your godly intent will not fail of its due reward from Christ. I do not see what I can do by my writings, for I have been singing to the deaf now for so many years.[1] It is not my place to pronounce on the plans of kings and on their rights. Is there a Christian anywhere who does not deplore the present state of Christendom? What an ugly precedent it is that the world's two most powerful monarchs are divided, and have been divided now for so many years by such implacable hostility,[2] and that the consensus of the states, the wisdom of the old, and the authority of abbots, bishops, cardinals, and pope carry so little weight with them. And now Clement is our pope, whose very name proclaims his zeal for peace. With wicked popes the case would be

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11 Decius' letter is not extant. It was perhaps written in response to Ep 2031 and answered by Ep 2075.
12 See Ep 2097 n1.
13 István Brodarics; see Ep 2178.
14 Ep 2174 n10

2177
1 *Adagia* I iv 87
2 Cf lines 47–8 below and Ep 2090:73–4.

different: harmonious relations among great princes is the last thing they want, for when princes quarrel they are not just popes but kings of kings.

Since this is the lesson history has been teaching us now for many years, I wonder why kings have not understood it, or if they have, why they do not remember it. I am afraid there are some whose eyes are blinded by ambition, whose judgment is warped by prejudice, and whose minds are more concerned with pleasure than the public good, leaving no room for philosophy. Kings, if they are wise, have no time for play. What in a private individual is counted extravagance or folly becomes impiety in a prince. Nothing should bring a prince more delight than peace in the land, the bettering of the people's morals, and the authority of good laws. Planning these things, instigating and defending them, that is the sport of princes – their gaming, their hunting, and their love affairs. Even if they had time to spare, a prince is too exalted a being to be captivated by such mean and sordid pleasures. Is he not a kind of god among men at whose nod so many thousands draw the sword and rush to their deaths, and on whose forethought hangs the fate of so many cities and kingdoms? Has such a man the leisure to pass the night in gaming, to laugh at jesters, to indulge in secret amours, and to dance?

King Ferdinand, realizing that no trust can be placed in the sharing of power, is perhaps shying away from a treaty, which, I think, he would not refuse if John were content with his former dignity.[3] At the Diet of Speyer there was a discussion about financial assistance, for money provides the sinews of war; but German ears were remarkably deaf to that demand – you would think it no concern of ours if the Turks, after subduing Hungary and Poland, are preparing the way for further advance in any direction they choose.[4] But Germany is more accustomed to receiving than to giving, and the world has so often been duped by claims of this sort that it is suspicious even when the need is very great. Certainly Ferdinand's piety merits everyone's support. What was intended by the title 'emperor' was that the holder of the office should use his authority to limit the aggression of other princes. But in reality the extent of his sway simply means that the calamity of war spreads more broadly. If the dukes of Lorraine and Savoy were to fall out, the trouble would be confined to a small area. But as long as the emperor and the king of France are in conflict, can any region of the world be at peace?

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3 Not until 1538 at Várad did Ferdinand and his rival for the control of Hungary, John Zápolyai, conclude a treaty which stipulated that each was to retain his current possessions and the title of king and that Ferdinand was to inherit John's lands should he die childless.

4 See Ep 2174 n8.

Flanders with its flourishing adjacent regions was first deprived of its native prince[5] and now for many years has been harassed by Gelderland and cannot safely trade with England and neighbouring France;[6] this is a hard blow to us and almost equally hard on the French and the British. Taxes are excessively heavy and a burden on everyone, but are particularly galling for us because the money is transferred to Germany and Spain. If this were not the case, then, as farmers say, a cow that feeds on grass, by manuring the field, makes good the damage it has done. Take the case of Italy, once the most flourishing region in the world – is there any place in the world that has been more devastated? And no one can travel through it safely. Need I mention Rome, the mother of all nations? Besides their other conquests the Turks have taken possession of Rhodes.[7] They ravaged Hungary, killing its king,[8] and now are threatening again. For years now there has been a long-standing quarrel with France, and all this while the world is filled with bands of soldiers who spare neither friend nor foe. A large proportion of these is said to be Lutheran or Jewish, but I think they do not deserve these names, since they believe in nothing at all.

The world is in the hands of monsters like these; the property of the people is being carted off. Need I say anything about the ruin of learning and the death of religion? How heavy upon us is the anger of a just God! Yet I do not see a single person thinking about changing his life for the better. May the Lord in his mercy avert the tragedy that you (perhaps wisely, but I hope mistakenly) predicted: that it will be the Turk who will quell the tumult of the sects, the tyranny of kings, and the insolence of those who do whatever they like in the name of the Roman pontiff. I would not wish upon us so cruel a physician; it is better to fall into the hands of God than into the hands of men. But whatever this deadly storm has in store for us, no one who has planted his feet on the solid rock will be cast down. It is the Lord: let him do what is good in his eyes,[9] for we do not know what is expedient for us. I gladly repeat your prayer: may the spirit of the Lord fill the whole earth and gather the princes who bear the name of Christ into the unity of the faith!

As for your request that I return your love, my distinguished friend, I would be the most ungrateful of mortals if I did not do so; in fact, even if

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5 Charles V, who since 1521 had been in Spain and was now about to go to Italy; see Ep 2167:30–2.
6 See Ep 1998 n7.
7 On 28 December 1522
8 Louis II, at the battle of Mohács, 29 August 1526
9 See Ep 2112 n16 (solid rock), 1 Sam 3:18 (his eyes).

I wished, I could not forget your kindness, for your clock is always in front of my eyes, measuring out the progress of my work. This in reply to the letter your Excellency wrote from the city of Warsaw on 6 February 1529.[10] Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 9 June 1529

2178 / To István Brodarics Freiburg, 9 June 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Erasmus' reply to a letter that is mentioned in Ep 2176:72–3. No further correspondence between Brodarics and Erasmus survives.

After earning a doctorate in canon law at Padua in 1506, István Brodarics (c 1471–1539) returned to Hungary, where he received major ecclesiastical preferments while undertaking important diplomatic missions on behalf of King Louis II. In 1526 he became royal chancellor and bishop of Szerém. That same year he was present with King Louis at the battle of Mohács and was one of the few in the royal entourage to escape with his life. At first he remained loyal to the widowed Queen Mary (Ep 2100) and supported the claim of her brother, Ferdinand of Austria, to the throne. But in the spring of 1527 he switched his allegiance to Ferdinand's rival, King John Zápolyai, in whose service he remained for the rest of his life, active in both the ecclesiastical and diplomatic life of the kingdom. At the time the present letter was written, he was in Poland, where he cultivated good relations with Zápolyai's ally, Sigismund I, and the officials of his court. In 1538, he was one of the signatories of the treaty of Várad between Ferdinand and Zápolyai (Ep 2177 n3). For his services he was rewarded with the bishoprics of Pécs (1532) and Vác (1536).

TO ISTVÁN BRODARICS, BISHOP ELECT OF PANNONIA[1] AND SOMETIME CHANCELLOR OF HUNGARY, FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

I wondered whether it was better to write nothing at all in response to your Lordship's learned and friendly letter or to reply in a few words, for my courier is unreliable,[2] and I am very busy. But it seemed discourteous not at least to return your greetings. While I do not claim any right to the

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10 Not extant

2178

1 Erasmus presumably means Pécs, the modern name of Sopianae, which was the capital city of the Roman province of Pannonia Valeria.

2 See Ep 2174 n10.

magnificent accolades you bestow on me, still I gladly welcome this evidence of your warm and loving heart. The fact that the most reverend bishop of Cracow[3] includes you among his closest friends leads me to believe that you are a man of singular piety and learning. So I shall write your name not just in the list of my friends (which I understand would satisfy your modest wishes) but in the honoured record of my special protectors.[4] As for the reputation I have gained, this has long been an embarrassment to me. What view posterity will take of me is something we must leave to heaven.

The general run of theologians weighs all Scripture against scholastic teaching, treating this as the pointer on a sundial, and attach very little importance to the ancient Doctors of the church. We are now told that Christ, in carrying out the task assigned to him by the Father, owed obedience to his mother; and that since he went to reign with the Father in heaven, his mother has the right to command him (so they conclude from the verse 'Show that you are his mother').[5] We are told that we may gain the kingdom of heaven through our good works, even good works *de condigno*.[6] We are told that continence is very easy, provided a man puts his mind to it. We are told there is great danger to the church if, during the sacred homily, we invoke Christ and the Holy Spirit instead of the Virgin Mother. We are told

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3 Piotr Tomicki; Ep 2173

4 Erasmus distinguishes here between a *catalogus* (list) of friends and an *album* (special list) of distinguished patrons and protectors. In ancient Rome *album* was the designation of such things as the annual list of senators posted in the senate house or the list of judges.

5 A line from the anonymous hymn (c eighth century) 'Ave maris Stella,' the fourth stanza of which reads: 'Show that you are a mother. May he who for our sake was willing to be your son, receive our prayers through you.'

6 Erasmus is here describing, in late-scholastic terminology, the extreme Pelagian view of the power of the human will, unaided by grace, to do good works. But in so doing he has carelessly substituted *de condigno* for *de congruo*. The orthodox view was that a morally good work performed before grace constituted *meritum de congruo* (a half-merit, one that God generously accepts but that does not of itself earn the gift of salvation), while a good work performed with God's help in the state of grace constituted *meritum de condigno* (a condign merit, one that is fully deserving of the reward of salvation). Someone of Pelagian views, which were often attributed to certain medieval theologians, would have claimed that the unaided will can perform works of condign merit. Like all the other views catalogued in this paragraph, this is one that Erasmus found reprehensible. For more information on the subject of congruous and condign merit and Erasmus' views concerning it, see CWE 76 xcvi–xcviii, 28–9.

that we should mourn the death of Christ as we mourn the death of any ordinary man; and much else. May God send us a second Ezra to restore the temple and Jerusalem.[7]

This is all I can write for the present. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 9 June 1529

2178A / From Willibald Pirckheimer Nürnberg, 14 June 1529

The manuscript of this letter, which was not included in the *Pirckheimeri Opera* and eluded discovery by Allen, survives in the Archives municipales at Strasbourg. It is a copy, one of many such made by the Strasbourg historian and politician Johann Wencker (d 1659) and now bound together in a single volume (AST 176 fol 401 verso). Erika Rummel called the letter to the attention of the CWE editors and supplied the transcription of it from which our translation was made. The Strasbourg text has now been published by Helga Scheible as Ep 1229 in WPB. In revising our text for publication, we have made ample use of the information in her notes.

TO THE DISTINGUISHED MASTER ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM ... COUNSELLOR,[1] GREETING

Distinguished sir. A day or two ago I dictated a letter to you and at the same time another to Doctor Zasius.[2] I am sending him a copy of the Digest,[3] which has been printed here; to you I am sending a silver-gilt bowl.[4] All these I have given to a travelling salesman from Nürnberg who is setting

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7 Ezra did not restore the temple or rebuild Jerusalem, but he did reintroduce strict religious observance among the Jews who had returned from exile in Babylon. See Ezra 7–10, Nehemiah 8–10.

2178A

1 The reference appears to be to Erasmus' status as an honorary counsellor to Charles V, a position he had held since 1515; see Ep 370:18n.

2 Neither of these letters is extant. The one to Erasmus probably answered Ep 2158. It is the present letter, not these two, that accompanied the gifts mentioned in the next sentence.

3 Holoander's edition of the Pandects, published at Nürnberg in April 1529; see Ep 1991 n4.

4 With the image of Terminus engraved on it; cf Ep 2196:136–9. The bowl is listed in the inventory of 10 April 1534 as 'gift of Willibald.' See Sieber 7 and Major 42. It is also listed in the inventory of July 1536; see Major 53 (with n43 on page 60). For Erasmus' explanation of the figure of Terminus see Ep 2018.

out for the fair at Strasbourg. His name is Friedrich Hess.[5] He will deliver everything to you etc.[6]

There is a rumour here that you are planning to go back to Basel. May it be your good fortune that brings this about.[7] Recently there came into my hands a splendid Greek manuscript containing upwards of fifty works of Gregory of Nazianzus.[8] One of our soldiers brought the Lexicon of Cyril,[9] along with several others that are not only worth publishing but ought to be published in the general interest; however, the Kobergers here are too small and tight-fisted and for that reason are reluctant to spend money on manuscripts.[10] If your friends in Basel had that lexicon, I have no doubt they would publish it. The owner values it at ten gold pieces, although it could not even have been written for thirty, since the lettering is elegant and on parchment. I must not write more. Do your best to keep cheerful. I suffer from gout in the hands and have to use an amanuensis. Farewell again.

Nürnberg, 14 June 1529. Willibald Pirckheimer

2179 / To Bonifacius Amerbach

Freiburg, 15 June [1529]

This letter (= AK Ep 1358) was first published in the *Epistolae familiares*. The autograph is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS AN III 15 6).

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5 Friedrich Hess the Elder of the Nürnberg hatmakers guild (d c February 1548); see WPB Ep 1229 n6.

6 The gift bowl and the letter accompanying it were delivered to Zasius, who sent them on to Erasmus; see Ep 2196:187–94.

7 Here we have adopted the reading of WPB, which emends the *fert* (is bringing) of the manuscript to *ferat* (may it bring). The subjunctive makes better grammatical sense.

8 The manuscript, which is no longer extant, had been taken as booty in Hungary in 1526. It was subsequently acquired by Johann Hess (a native Nürnberger employed as a Lutheran pastor in Wrocław), who sent it to Pirckheimer sometime after 4 April 1529 (WPB Ep 1219). By 15 May Pirckheimer had it in hand and had announced his intention, despite poor health, to translate all fifty works (WPB Ep 1227:36–40).

9 Doubtless the fifth-century λεξικὸν κατὰ στοιχεῖον attributed to Cyril of Alexandria, which was the most important Greek lexicon used in the Middle Ages. See *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, Neue Bearbeitung* ed Georg Wissowa et al 12/1 (Stuttgart 1924) 174–5.

10 The reference is to the Nürnberg printing firm founded by Anton Koberger (d 1513) and thereafter managed by his cousin Johann Koberger (d 1543).

I always saw this foolishness coming,[1] and I am strongly opposed to your father-in-law's advice.[2] I hope I am wrong in my prediction of worse things to come. I very much want to know the state of your affairs.[3] The news this man brings is far from happy.[4] The weather here suits me beautifully, but I do not like how things are starting out. May the Lord protect the innocent. My best wishes to you, dearest of friends, and to your excellent brother.

Freiburg, 15 June

I am sure you recognize your friend.

To Bonifacius Amerbach or, if he is away, to his brother Basilius or to Bonifacius' wife[5]

2180 / From Bonifacius Amerbach Basel, [c 20 June 1529]

This letter (= AK Ep 1359) is Bonifacius' response to Ep 2179. An abridged version was published as Ep 43 in Burckhardt. The complete text was first published by Allen. The autograph rough-draft is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS C VIa 73 81).

I have just now received your letter, in which you give, as you always do, the most striking evidence of your affection for me by the fear and anxiety that you feel over my situation. You must have courage, Erasmus, most considerate of friends.

So far everything seems fairly settled here – provided no worse disaster follows. I admit we are worried by the initial moves, which bode no good. A few days ago we sent reinforcements to Zürich,[1] which had conscripted

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2179

1 Not, as Allen conjectured, a reference to the Basel 'Reformation Mandate' of 1 April 1529 but rather one to the recent outbreak of war between the Protestant and Catholic cantons (Ep 2173 n10), concerning which Erasmus expects 'worse things to come' (lines 2–3 below). That is what Bonifacius understood Erasmus to be talking about; see Ep 2180:5–10.

2 Leonhard Fuchs (d 1548), the burgomaster of Neuenburg am Rhein, had advised Bonifacius to move to Freiburg; see AK Ep 1337:4–15.

3 Ie the status of Bonifacius' negotiations with the Basel city council over his professorship in the law faculty of the university; see Ep 2180:18–21.

4 The identity of the man is unknown, but it would appear from the sentences that follow that his news was about the conflict in the Confederation.

5 Cf Ep 2151 nn6–7.

2180

1 On 12 June Basel dispatched a contingent of five hundred men; see *Basler*

an army and was intent on avenging some mysterious injury done to the Swiss; they are determined to fight for the gospel, which fires them with such zeal. What a gospel! What a way to defend the gospel!

Not much later a sudden flooding of a rapid stream known as the Birsig did a lot of harm to public and private property;[2] many people are saying that the damage cannot be repaired even for one hundred thousand gold pieces.[3] I was reminded of Deucalion and of the time when Proteus, as the poet says, 'drove his flock to look upon the lofty mountains.'[4] What these events portend, our Saviour Christ knows, to whose care I commend all things.

As to the present state of my affairs, I presented to the city council the main conditions under which I could remain in my position, that is, my position in civil law.[5] While they continue to discuss the matter, I am remaining here. I shall tell you in person on which side the decision comes down.[6] Meanwhile, I beg you to remember me, the most sincere and loyal of all your friends anywhere in the world. Farewell.

In haste, Basel

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Chroniken ed Wilhelm Vischer et al I (Leipzig 1872) 100. By the evening of 27 June they were back home; see *Aktensammlung zur Geschichte der Basler Reformation* ed Emil Dürr et al III (Basel 1937) 597.

2 *Basler Chroniken* (see n1 above) I 102 gives 14 June as the date of this inundation. The Birsig was a small stream, much given to sudden floods, that ran through the marketplace in Basel and past houses in the lower city on its way to the Rhine. (Today it is entirely channeled underground.) Cf Ep 2196: 16–19.

3 Perhaps an exaggerated estimate, but cf the similar statement in Ep 2196:19–20, which refers to 100,000 ducats – an enormous sum, worth about £2,333 sterling or £3,333 groot Flemish. See CWE 12 650 Table 3D.

4 The poet is Horace, see *Odes* 1.2.7–8. Proteus is the sea god who was guardian of Neptune's seals (his flock). The classic account of Deucalion and the flood is in Ovid *Metamorphoses* 1.262–415.

5 The conditions, which included a substantial raise in pay (to 100 Gulden per annum) and exemption from participation in evangelical worship, were set out in a letter submitted to the Basel city council at the beginning of June 1529 (AK Ep 1356). In late November Bonifacius reported that his conditions had been accepted (AK Ep 1394:4–6), but in January 1530 he would complain that the council's promises were not being kept (Allen Ep 2248:21–7). In the period 1531–4, moreover, he would repeatedly be subjected to pressure to participate in evangelical worship; see Burckhardt 78–103.

6 On the visit to Erasmus at Freiburg that finally took place in August. See Ep 2194 n1.

2181 / From Ambrosius Pelargus [Freiburg, c 20 June 1529]

First published in Pelargus' *Bellaria* (Ep 2169 introduction), this letter continues the epistolary conversation that began with Epp 2169–70. In Ep 2169 Pelargus proposed that he and Erasmus should engage in a frank and friendly debate about certain passages in Erasmus' works that seemed to him to be in need of correction. In Ep 2170 Erasmus, who was always open to friendly criticism and did not often get it from Dominicans, readily agreed. With the present letter, then, Pelargus inaugurated the debate, which was continued in a further four letters (Epp 2182 and 2184–6). The principal question addressed was whether Erasmus, in his New Testament scholarship, was mistaken in identifying the apostle Judas (also known as Thaddeus), as 'the *son* of James' rather than 'the *brother* of James.' Pelargus, who believed strongly in 'brother,' undertook to persuade Erasmus to correct passages in his edition of the New Testament and his Paraphrases where he had written 'son.' Although the issue was, as Pelargus himself observed, 'quite insignificant' in that getting it wrong was not a violation of the substance of the faith, it was the sort of knotty problem that biblical translators and exegetes have to try to solve. So Erasmus and Pelargus debated it with the frankness and friendliness that Pelargus had called for.

The source of the problem was in the biblical text itself. In the lists of the original twelve apostles in both the original Greek and the Latin Vulgate versions of the New Testament, the phrase 'son of' is represented by a simple genitive. Thus 'James son of Zebedee' is written simply as 'James of Zebedee.' That 'son of' was the correct translation in most cases was not in doubt. But it could be argued that in some cases the genitive really meant 'brother of,' and in the case of the apostle 'Judas of James' (who is not to be confused with Judas Iscariot), this was the common assumption of the medieval church. The question, however, was vexed by a number of other difficulties and obscurities in the biblical text. Chief among these was the bewildering variety of scantily identified Jameses and Judases encountered there. For example, was the apostle 'Judas of James' to be identified with the author of the Epistle of Jude, who is called 'Judas' in the Greek New Testament and the Vulgate, and who identifies himself as 'brother of James'? And if so, was the James of whom Jude/Judas was the brother to be identified with James 'the brother of the Lord,' who was traditionally assumed to be an apostle and the author of the eponymous Epistle? Finally, if Judas and James were both brothers of Jesus, did 'brother' necessarily mean 'blood brother,' or could it indicate some other close relationship? In addressing these questions, Pelargus defended the tradition of medieval scholarship, which identified the New Testament's Judases

and Jameses in a way that upheld the apostolic authorship of the Epistles of James and Jude but did not make James or Jude/Judas the blood brother of Jesus. Erasmus, by contrast, marshalled the evidence for finding in the New Testament text more Judases and Jameses than Pelargus was prepared to acknowledge and for questioning the apostolic authorship of both epistles.

Pelargus was not the first to take Erasmus to task for calling Judas (not Iscariot) the son of James. Noël Béda had done so in 1526, and Erasmus had conceded that he was in error. But, as Pelargus was quick to point out, there were passages in works published since 1526 in which 'son of' had not been corrected to 'brother of.' So Erasmus conceded the point again and started to make the necessary corrections, though not without first summarizing the evidence in favour of 'son of' and punching a few holes in Pelargus' arguments. Modern biblical scholars are virtually unanimous in viewing 'Judas son of James' as the appropriate translation.

For a more detailed discussion of the question of the identity of 'Judas of James,' and of Erasmus' answers to it, see CWE 44 125 (with n1 on pages 315–16), and 50 9 (with n71 on page 364). For more information on the Jameses of the New Testament see Ep 2184 introduction.

AMBROSIUS PELARGUS TO HIS FRIEND ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Since according to Horace even the mighty Homer frequently nods,[1] I should not be puzzled (as many are), most learned Erasmus, about what was in your mind and what authority you had when you turned Judas Lebbaeus (also called Thaddaeus) into the son of James;[2] for it is clearer than the noonday sun that in this instance you have fallen into the sort of error that human beings commonly make, that is to say, you have gone astray through misunderstanding or ignorance. But what has often puzzled me is why, after being repeatedly advised of your mistake by reputable theologians, you refuse to acknowledge it. In your response to Béda you excuse your error as a slip of the pen, and you say you corrected it in the latest edition. You maintain you

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2181

1 Horace *Ars poetica* 359

2 'Judas of James' is found in the list of the original twelve apostles only in Luke 6:16 and in Acts 1:13. Matthew 10:2–4 and Mark 3:16–19, by contrast, include Judas Iscariot but no other Judas. They do, however, include a 'Thaddeus,' or (in some versions of Matthew known to Erasmus and Pelargus, a 'Lebbaeus called Thaddeus'), whom exegetes identified with 'Judas of James' in order to harmonize the biblical roster of apostles. Hence the name 'Judas Lebbaeus' that Pelargus uses here.

never believed that Judas was the son of James. 'If,' you say, 'I had thought he was the son of James, I would have added some sort of note on the point; in fact I make no mention of it.'[3] But will anyone believe you when you say that this was never your position when you expressed it in more than one place? I refer to your edition of the New Testament,[4] to the Paraphrases, and also to the Annotations themselves, now revised and corrected for the fourth time.[5] So what you needed to excuse was a blunder, not a slip of the pen. As for your denial that 'son' ever appeared in the Annotations, that I take to be a slip of memory rather than a deliberate falsehood. I beg you in the name of our friendship to tell us honestly what your opinion is on this matter. I for my part shall endeavour to prevent the view you have already expressed from taking root in your mind, although the point at issue may be quite insignificant, at least in so far as it affects the sum and substance of the faith.

When you say that you will gladly give way to me if I propose a better idea,[6] I do not doubt that, being the honest person you are, you mean what you say and that you will act accordingly. Certainly, in any learned discussion it is better to be won over than to win. I too shall gladly yield the victory to you if you offer a sounder view, for who but a fool or an inveterate enemy of the truth would not yield to the truth? To do so involves no loss of reputation, and as you say somewhere, no one loses, rather everyone benefits, including both the person who wins and the one who is defeated.

I undertook to lecture to candidates in theology on Tobit and on some other books of the Old and New Testaments. I find many passages in Tobit very dry and boring and many more that are quite enigmatic, particularly in the text of the Septuagint. As a result I almost regret my decision to take on this responsibility. At the end of the book we have these words: 'Remember, my son, how Aman handled Achiacharus, who brought him up,

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3 See *Divinationes ad notata Bedae* (1526) LB IX 463E–F; cf *Supputatio errorum in censuris Bedae* (1527) LB IX 579D–580C.

4 In his translation of Acts 1:13 in the 1516 and 1519 editions of the New Testament, Erasmus rendered the Greek possessive as 'son of James.' From 1522 onwards it was 'brother of.' See CWE 50 364. (In Luke 6:16, on the other hand, he stuck consistently to the Latin genitive 'Judas of James'; see Ep 2182 n1.)

5 In all the editions of the Annotations before the fifth in 1535 (that of 1527 was the fourth), the annotation on Matt 10:3 refers to Judas as the 'son of James.' Cf LB VI 53E, which reproduces the 1535 reading, 'brother.' Similarly, in all editions of the *Paraphrase on Matthew* until that of 1534, Judas was 'son' rather than 'brother' of James. See CWE 45 166.

6 Ep 2170:32–4

how out of the light he led him into κόψος etc.'[7] I am unsure how to translate the passage since I do not know the meaning of the little word κόψος. Someone understands the passage to mean that Aman gave the worst possible reward to Achiacharus, who nurtured him, that is, he brought him from light into darkness. But it is not clear from the text whether the translator meant that he, that is, Achiacharus, was thrown into a dark prison or bereft of the light of his eyes. Will you please examine the passage and let me know through your servant what sense seems preferable to you? Farewell.

2182 / To Ambrosius Pelargus [Freiburg, June 1529]

This letter, which was first published in Pelargus' *Bellaria* (Ep 2169 introduction), is a continuation of the debate that commenced with Ep 2181. For orientation in the debate, see the introduction to that letter.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND AMBROSIUS PELARGUS, GREETING

You were surprised that I did not correct 'Judas the son of James.' What I find is quite different, for in Luke 6 my text has 'Judas of James,' and the annotation makes no comment on it,[1] I would like to know what grounds you had for concluding that this Judas was the brother of James the apostle, whose brother was John. First of all you will not find among Jews or Greeks or any other people any instance where a person takes his surname from someone unless he is under his authority, as a son is under the authority of his father, and a wife of her husband.

Then in the actual list of the apostles in Matthew 10[:2–4] we read 'James of Zebedee, and 'James of Alphaeus.' Similarly in Mark 3[:14–19] and Luke 6[:13–16] we read 'James of Alphaeus' and a little later 'Judas of James.'[2] Since the form of this expression is left incomplete, and since in the

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7 Tobit 14:10; here cited in the Greek of the Septuagint. The non-existent Greek word κόψος puzzled Pelargus. Modern texts of the Septuagint read τὸ σκότος 'darkness.' The meaning of the passage, however, remains a puzzle.

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1 Cf lines 52–3 below. In Erasmus' own Latin translation of Luke 6:16 he consistently adhered to the simple genitive of the Greek and Vulgate texts and said nothing about 'son' or 'brother' in the annotations. See LB VI 254B.

2 Mark does not in fact mention 'Judas' but, like Matthew, he does mention 'Thaddaeus,' whom exegetes equated with 'Judas of James.' See Ep 2181 n2.

catalogue of the disciples the word that is understood is always 'son,' is it likely that in this single instance we should understand the word 'brother,' especially since the sons of Zebedee are mentioned by name in this passage? If Judas was Zebedee's son, why did the evangelist choose to distinguish him by his brother's name rather than his father's? Moreover, how can we square this with the fact that their mother pleaded with the Lord for a place of honour for two sons, taking no account of the third?[3]

Besides neither the *Ecclesiastical History* nor any of the old authorities relates that Judas Thaddaeus was the brother of James, either James the Less or James the Great.[4] All we are told is that Judas was a relative of the Lord according to the flesh.[5] Indeed Jerome indicates that he was distinguished from the Betrayer by the surname Lebbaeus or Thaddaeus, not by the addition of his brother's name.[6] 'But,' you will say, 'in the title of the epistle he calls himself "the brother of James."'[7] Let me say first of all that Eusebius counts this among the doubtful epistles.[8] Nor is it satisfactorily established that its author was the apostle. Jerome also thinks that the Epistle of James, the two last Epistles of John, and the second of Peter are not the work of the apostles – or at least he doubts the attribution.[9] I do not think we should attach so much weight to titles that are added by scribes at their own discretion.[10] But supposing he were the apostle, it is unlikely he was the son of Zebedee, as we have shown. If, on the other hand, he had James the son of Alphaeus as his brother, then I do not see how he can be a relation of the Lord, and we have it on the authority of Eusebius that

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3 Matt 20:20–2

4 'James the Less' ('James the Younger' RSV), so identified only in Mark 15:40, was the son of Mary, the sister of Jesus' mother, and her husband Clopas (John 19:25). Mark's appellation stuck to this James because it served to distinguish him from 'James the Great,' son of Zebedee and elder brother of St John. He was commonly but mistakenly identified with the apostle James, son of Alphaeus (Mark 3:18). Cf Ep 2184 n3.

5 Eusebius *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.20

6 Jerome *Commentariorum in evangelium Matthaei libri quatuor* 1 (on Matt 10:4)

7 Jude 1

8 Eusebius *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.25, 6.14

9 Jerome *De viris illustribus* 1, 2, 9

10 In this context, the Latin *titulus* means two different things: 1/ the opening salutation of a letter (ie 'Jude, the servant ... to them that are sanctified ... mercy and peace'), and 2/ the title of the book (ie 'The Epistle of Jude'). Erasmus here is talking about the second meaning, but Pelargus will misunderstand it as a reference to the first; see Epp 2184:124–32, 2185:13–16, 2186: 56–60.

Judas was related to the Lord.[11] We know also of a third James, the bishop of Jerusalem, who was not one of the Twelve; he died after being struck with a fuller's club.[12] Besides, you are aware that in Hebrew 'brother' is used of a relative of any kind or a member of the same family. Surnames are not formed from such relationships. Remember also that the Epistle of Jude occupies the last place.[13] The writer himself cites the apostles, saying, 'Remember the words which were spoken before by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ.'[14] He nowhere calls himself an apostle but rather a servant of Jesus Christ,[15] although Peter and Paul adopt that privileged title.[16] John does not employ a title, but makes it clear enough that he was an apostle.

I have collected a whole thicket of evidence for you; so now make your way out of it, if you can. Since it seemed absurd to me that a brother should derive his surname from a brother and since I had found no clear evidence on the point in any of the ancients, I left in my text the reading that I found: 'Judas of James.' As for my note, I removed it at least by the fourth edition,[17] for I do not have the others. Please let me know if you have anything better to suggest. When you have considered the question, we shall discuss it together if you wish.

I have no doubt there is a scribal error in the Tobit passage. Francesco of Asola wrote that when he was printing those volumes, the copy he was

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11 *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.20

12 Eusebius *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.23, citing Hegesippus and Josephus, both of whom identify this James, known to the early church as 'James the Righteous,' as the brother of Jesus.

13 The most obvious meaning of 'last place' would be 'the last in order of the epistles in the New Testament,' since the book is placed just before the Book of Revelation. Jude is probably also the last of the epistles chronologically. But Erasmus' primary meaning is doubtless 'last in authority,' because the author seems to disclaim the status of apostle. In the preface to the volume of Paraphrases that included the one on Jude, Erasmus says that Jude was 'slower in reaching authority' because he adduced (in verses 14–15) evidence from the Book of Enoch, a work of doubtful orthodoxy (Ep 1122:63–5). All of this served to make Erasmus skeptical of the value of the Epistle of Jude as a source with which to clinch an argument about the 'Judas of James' in the list of the apostles in Luke and Acts.

14 Jude 17

15 Jude 1

16 Ie the title of apostle. See eg the opening verses of 1 and 2 Peter, Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians.

17 Ie the annotation on Matt 10:3. In the fourth edition of the Annotations (1527) the phrase 'son of James' was still present in the annotation. It was not removed until the edition of 1535; see Ep 2181 n5.

working from was hopelessly corrupt.[18] You should not be impressed by agreement among the texts, since the Strasbourg edition followed the Aldine.[19] Farewell.

2183 / To Bonifacius Amerbach [Freiburg, c 23 June 1529]

This letter (= AK Ep 1360) is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2180. It was first published in the *Epistolae familiares*. The autograph is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS AN III 15 70). Boniface seems to have written two replies, Epp 2187 and 2194, only the second of which was sent (cf Ep 2187 introduction).

What are you saying, my dearest Bonifacius? That I should not be anxious about the better part of my soul? What an incalculable treasure I would lose, if anything untoward happened!

I see no one here who is greatly worried. But I cannot put aside all anxiety when I think how events are developing. Your native wit[1] will suggest to you what best suits your interests.

Hieronymus Froben has in his possession some money belonging to me: in gold, 198 *écus à la couronne au soleil* and the value of another 11 such *écus* in *testons*, along with 40 kreuzers.[2] I imagine you will travel as far as

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18 Cf Ep 1349:17–18. It is not known where Francesco Torresani said this; he did not do so in his preface to the edition of the Greek texts of the Septuagint and New Testament (Ep 770) published by Aldus at Venice in 1518: *Sacrae Scripturae veteris novaeque omnia*.

19 The Strasbourg edition was *Divinae Scripturae veteris novaeque omnia* (W. Cephalaeus 1526), edited by Johannes Lonicerus (Ep 1934 n23).

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1 Literally 'your Pallas' (cf Ep 2191:56). Pallas Athena, and particularly her equivalent in Latin, Minerva, symbolized wisdom or native wit.

2 The *teston* was a very high value French silver coin, first struck in April 1513, with a fineness of 11 deniers 18 grains or 97.917 per cent *argent-le-roy* = 93.837 per cent pure silver, with a value of 10s tournois (120d), ie half a *livre tournois*. In October 1521, its fineness was reduced to 89.84 per cent pure silver (11 deniers 6 grains *argent-le-roy*), but the coin retained the same exchange value of 10s 0d tournois. Since the *écu à la couronne au soleil* was worth 40s tournois, the sum of 11 *écus* (= 440s tournois) would have been worth exactly 44 such silver *teston* coins. Since, furthermore, this *écu* was worth 84 kreuzers (cf Ep 2153 n4), the total sum equalled 209.476 *écus*, which was worth £418.952 tournois, or £48.878 sterling (at 56d), or £66.334 groot Flemish (at 76d). See CWE 1 312, 315–16, and 331–2, CWE 8 348–50, and CWE 12 650 Table 3D; Adrian Blanchet and Adolphe Dieudonné *Manuel de numismatique française* 2 vols (Paris

Neuenburg by boat.[3] The rest of the journey is safe. I would be pleased if you brought the money with you. Anything could happen to that fierce warrior Hieronymus.[4] If there is some reason why you hesitate to undertake this, I would still prefer the money to be in your hands or in those of your father-in-law.[5]

My best wishes to you and to your brother Basilius and to your wife.[6] Be assured that I am most willing to help you in any way I can.

I am glad you have not left yet.[7] Someone had suggested that this was the case. I have written to Hieronymus about the money. With a word from you, he will hand it over.

Your true friend, Erasmus

To the distinguished doctor of laws, Bonifacius Amerbach. In Basel

2184 / From Ambrosius Pelargus [Freiburg, June 1529]

Like all the other letters in the current exchange between Pelargus and Erasmus (Epp 2169–70, 2181–2, 2185–6), this one was first published in Pelargus' *Bellaria* (Ep 2169 introduction). It is, however, unique among those letters in that the autograph manuscript survived in the ill-fated Burscher Collection at Leipzig (Ep 1254 introduction). Pelargus edited the letter for publication, and it is the published version that Allen printed, observing that the variations between the manuscript and Pelargus' final version 'are too numerous and too unimportant to be worth recording.'

In Epp 2181–2, Erasmus and Pelargus had debated whether 'Judas of James' meant Judas *son* of James or *brother* of James. By now, however, this question had been enlarged to include one even more vexed, namely the identity of

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1916; reissued 1988) II: *Monnaies royales françaises depuis Huges Capet jusqu'à la Revolution*.

3 Neuenburg am Rhein, halfway between Basel and Freiburg

4 Allen thought that 'the fierce warrior' might have joined the troops in the First Kappel War but, as the AK editors point out, Hieronymus Froben was not on the active-duty list of his guild and in any case would have sent a substitute had he been called up.

5 Cf Epp 2194:3–6, 2199:1–3. For Bonifacius' father-in-law see Ep 2179 n2.

6 Cf Ep 2151 nn7 and 6.

7 Allen speculated that Bonifacius might be heading off to the Kappel War but, as a professor at the university, he was exempt from military service. What made Erasmus 'glad' was the news that Bonifacius had not undertaken to leave Basel to settle in Freiburg, as his father-in-law wanted him to do; see Ep 2179:1–2.

the James of whom Judas was supposedly the brother. Modern biblical scholars have identified no fewer than six Jameses in the New Testament, some of them already mentioned in the preceding letters: 1/ James the Great, son of Zebedee, one of the original twelve apostles and brother of St John; 2/ James, son of Alphaeus, also one of the original twelve apostles; 3/ James the Less (or the Younger), son of Clopas; 4/ James, the father (or brother) of the apostle Judas (not Iscariot); 5/ James the Righteous, brother of Jesus and first bishop of Jerusalem; and 6/ James, the author of the general epistle of that name. Siding with tradition, Pelargus would admit the existence of only two Jameses, James the Great and a James that was a composite of James the Less and the remaining four. Erasmus, by contrast, came closer to modern scholarship by insisting on at least three distinct Jameses – James the Great, James the Less (whose identity with James of Alphaeus was grudgingly conceded), and James the Righteous – as well as by hesitating to acknowledge that James the Righteous was the author of the Epistle of James.

AMBROSIUS PELARGUS TO HIS FRIEND ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

It is now apparent, Erasmus my most learned friend, that you concealed your real opinion and made up an excuse about a slip of the pen; for you persist in your contention that this Judas was not the brother of James, principally because 'not . . . among Jews, or Greeks, or any other people' etc. I am confident that I shall quickly dispel this erroneous conviction and even conjure it out of existence from wherever it cast its spell on you, though I shall do so not with incantations but with the solid evidence of Scripture. Tell me now, my good sir, does a mother come under the authority of her son? Well, in Holy Writ we find that a mother has taken her surname from her son – and not just in one passage: in Mark 16[:1] and likewise in Luke 24[:10] we read 'Mary of James.' But if anyone argues that she was James' wife, not his mother, let him consider whether single-handed he can take on two Hercules,[1] namely Matthew and Mark, who specifically add the word 'mother.'[2]

Then, in the catalogue of apostles in Matthew 10[:2–3]: we read 'James of Zebedee' and 'James of Alphaeus' and similarly in Luke 6[:15–16] 'James of Alphaeus' and later 'Judas of James'; you ask how it is that in the catalogue

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1 A variant of the adage 'Not even Hercules can take on two'; *Adagia* I v 39

2 Matt 27:56; Mark 15:40

itself the word 'son' is always understood, yet in a single instance it is the word 'brother' that is understood. What justifies us in understanding 'brother' in this passage is the fact that in Matthew 13[:55] and Mark 6[:3] James, Judas, Simon, and Joses are called the brothers of Christ. Moreover, it is not scriptural usage to call anyone the 'brother' of a person if he is that person's son. 'But,' you will say, 'this does not prove they are blood brothers, though the actual words suggest some kind of relationship between them.' True: I do not think that the Nazarenes themselves were of that opinion or believed that they shared the same parents as Christ. Rather they are called the brothers of Christ because they were the nephews of the Lord's mother, that is, they were the children of Mary, the sister of the Lord's mother, by her husband Alphaeus.[3] That is the consistent position of all the best authorities, and it is highly likely to be correct. Certainly it will not be difficult to show that they were blood brothers, providing we first establish that the James who is called the son of Alphaeus in the list of disciples[4] and the James who is described in Mark 15[:40] as the son of Mary are the same person. Given that in that passage Joses also is called the son of Mary,[5] and that the evidence of Mark and Matthew establish that Judas and Simon are brothers of theirs and Scripture assigns no other parents to them, is not the most logical possibility (as far as it is possible to draw a conclusion negatively from the evidence) that those men were blood brothers? Besides, Chrysostom calls James, the Lord's brother, 'James of Clopas,'[6] and Eusebius refers to the Simon mentioned in the Gospels as 'Simon, the son of Clopas.'[7]

With regard to your third and fourth points, I have no idea what you mean. You argue as though I or anyone else equated Judas with the brother of James the son of Zebedee. I doubt if any theologian held this view, even in his dreams. You deny that any of the ancient authorities ever wrote that this Judas was the brother of James the Less.[8] You will find to the contrary

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3 Pelargus correctly identifies Mary the sister of Jesus' mother, who is mentioned as a witness to the crucifixion in John 19:25, with Mary the mother of James the Less in other accounts of the crucifixion (Matt 27:55, Mark 15:40) as well as in Luke 24:10. But where John identifies Mary's husband as Clopas, Pelargus calls him Alphaeus, thus equating James the Less with the apostle James, son of Alphaeus. In lines 73–81 below, Pelargus argues the case for identifying Clopus with Alphaeus. Cf Ep 2182 n4.

4 Matt 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15

5 Ie Mark 15:40

6 Chrysostom *In epistulam ad Galatas commentarius* 1.19

7 Eusebius *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.11

8 On James the Less and James the Great, see Ep 2182 n4.

in Hegesippus, Hilary, Theophylact, and other ancient authors of the first rank, though they differ in naming the father.[9] You ask how it was that, if he is the son of Alphaeus, the evangelist chose to distinguish him from the Betrayer by his brother's name rather than his father's. I reply that, for the purpose intended, it does not matter whether the evangelist cites the name of the father or the brother to distinguish this Judas from Judas the Betrayer. So it is not very smart to go hunting for a defence of your opinion in that quarter or, similarly, by saying that Jerome distinguished this Judas from the Betrayer by adding the surname Lebbaeus, not the name of his brother. Holy Scripture has three ways of distinguishing him from the Betrayer: first, in Matthew 10[:3], by adding the surname Lebbaeus (or possibly Thaddeus), second, in Luke 6[:16], by adding the name of James, and finally, in John 14[:22], by a simple negative, 'Judas (not Iscariot) says to him.'

You say: 'If Judas had James the son of Alphaeus as his brother, then I do not see how he was a relation of the Lord, and we have it on the authority of Eusebius that Judas was related to the Lord.' I wonder why you felt it necessary to doubt something that no one has ever doubted. James of Alphaeus (if we trust Chrysostom) is the same as the person called the 'brother of the Lord' by Paul in Galatians 1[:19].[10] Is he not also the same man who was ordained bishop of Jerusalem – unless you propose to foist on us another James who was not one of the Twelve? Let me get you out of this entanglement. You will not deny that Hegesippus and, following him, Eusebius maintain that James the brother of the Lord was ordained by the apostles as the first bishop of Jerusalem.[11] And, as Jerome explains in his *Catalogus*, the same man was the son of Mary, the sister of the Lord's mother,[12] who was the wife of Alphaeus. So it is the same James who was called the brother of the Lord and is said to have been ordained by the apostles as bishop of Jerusalem, namely the son of Alphaeus. It is no obstacle that the sister of the Lord's mother is called by the Evangelist the wife of Clopas,[13] for according to Lefèvre, Alphaeus was also called Clopas.[14] Chrysostom does not

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9 Erasmus and Pelargus appear to know Hegesippus only via the passages of him quoted in Eusebius (cf Ep 2185:9, 16–23), but in none of those passages does Hegesippus say that Judas was the brother of James the Less. The references to Hilary and Theophylact could not be identified.

10 Chrysostom *In Iohannem homiliae* 48.2

11 Eusebius, citing Hegesippus, in *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.23

12 Jerome *De viris illustribus* 2

13 John 19:25

14 Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples *Commentarii initiatorii in quatuor evangelia* (Meaux: Simon Colinaeus 1522) fol 39 verso.

contradict this view when he says that James the brother of the Lord was called by the evangelist James of Clopas,[15] indicating by the actual confusion in his names that Alphaeus had two names. However, nowhere in the Gospels do we read of James of Clopas.

You reject the evidence of Jude, who at the very beginning of his epistle calls himself the brother of James. 'Eusebius,' you say, 'counts this among the doubtful epistles.'[16] You may add if you like that the same writer in the second book of his *Ecclesiastical History*, chapter 23, says that none of the ancients regularly mention that epistle or the epistle of James. But at the same time you fail to mention what follows: 'We know, however, that these two are accepted, along with the others,[17] by almost all the churches.' So much for Eusebius. Tertullian shows that the epistle of Jude was in use even in his time, for he says in his *De habitu mulierum* (if I have got the title right): 'We should not reject the Book of Enoch, since it is an edifying work and divinely inspired; moreover it is supported by the testimony of the apostle Jude.'[18]

The gratuitous remarks that you make about the Epistle of James, the two last Epistles of John, and the second of Peter have no bearing on the present question; so I do not think there is much point in responding to them at length, but I shall say briefly what I think. Show me, I ask you, even a single passage where Jerome either denies or doubts that those epistles were written by the authors to whom they are ascribed. In your annotations on the Epistle of James you say that the two last Epistles of John were written by someone else,[19] and you cite Jerome as the source of this statement, although on this point he neither asserts nor denies that they are the work of someone else. In his *Catalogue of Illustrious Men* we have, 'He wrote one epistle, beginning "What was" etc, which is approved by all scholars and ecclesiastics. The remaining two, which begin "The elder unto the elect lady" and "The elder unto the well-beloved Gaius," are claimed to be the work of John the presbyter.'[20] But you, relying (so you claim) on the authority of Jerome, boldly assert, 'The two last epistles were written by John the presbyter, not John the apostle.'[21] Jerome does not assert this, but Erasmus utters

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15 See n6 above.
16 Eusebius *Historia ecclesiastica* 3.25, 6.14
17 Ie the rest of the catholic (general) epistles
18 Tertullian *De cultu feminarum* 1.3
19 Annotation on James 1:1 (LB VI 1025B–C)
20 *De viris illustribus* 9.4–5
21 Annotation on 3 John 12 (LB VI 1088C); see also the annotation on James 1:1 (LB VI 1025B–C).

this as a dogmatic pronouncement straight from the Sibyl's tripod.[22] By the same logic (your logic, that is) you maintain that, according to Jerome, the epistle that a large majority agree to be by James was not written by the James who was one of the Twelve, but by someone else etc. Yet Jerome does not say that the apostle James was different from the man who in his view wrote this epistle. Nor in his *Catalogue* does he doubt that Peter was the author of the second epistle; he only suggests that some people deny Peter's authorship because it differs in character from the first. To point out that there are people who deny it to be the work of the apostle is not immediately to agree with them; on the contrary it indicates a preference for a different view, as he states plainly when writing to Paul the presbyter as follows: 'James, Peter, John, and Jude produced seven letters, which are as full of spiritual insight as they are succinct, short yet at the same time long' etc.[23] So either Jerome is inconsistent or (if I may say so) you are mistaken in what you ascribe to Jerome.

But let us return to the Epistle of Jude. In order to defend the position to which you cling tooth and nail, you are prepared to undermine the very title of the Epistle as though it were something added at the whim of a scribe. You say, 'I do not think we should attach so much weight to titles that are added by scribes at their own discretion.'[24] What is this I hear? If titles, which are like keys to the faith, are called into question, then no part of the Holy Bible is free from suspicion. On that reasoning does the whole authority of Scripture not begin to crumble? So think, I ask you, how ill-considered, arbitrary, and unreasonable these remarks of yours have been.

Furthermore, when you state that Jude cites the apostles and infer from his statement that he was not an apostle, I am no more impressed than I would be if someone were to argue like this: 'Paul in his travels through Syria and Cilicia taught that we should keep the commandments of the apostles. Therefore he was not himself an apostle.' The same argument proves that Peter was not an apostle because in his second Epistle he makes reference to the apostle Paul. Of course in this case I know from other sources that Peter and Paul were apostles, which is not clear in the case of this Jude. The title itself is good enough evidence for us that he was an apostle and one of those included in the evangelist's list.

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22 *Adagia* I vii 90: *Ex tripode*, a saying 'customarily used of what we passionately wish to be thought unquestionably true' (CWE 32 121)

23 The name of the presbyter was Paulinus, not Paul; see Jerome Ep 53.8. The quotation continues: 'short in the number of words, long in their sentiments.'

24 See Ep 2182:32–4 with n10.

'But,' you say, 'he nowhere calls himself an apostle, but rather a servant of Jesus Christ, while Paul and Peter adopt that privileged title.' By this reasoning we shall allow neither of the two Epistles to the Thessalonians to be by Paul, but attribute them to some other person of that name. Indeed by this form of argument we deny that John the apostle wrote his Gospel or his first Epistle, since he nowhere calls himself an apostle. Everyone knows that in Scripture *frater* 'brother' is sometimes used of a relative in any degree. This fact, however, gets you nowhere, or if you think you have gained something, then will you please cite a single passage of Scripture where someone is called the 'brother' of a man if he is that person's actual son. Let me cap my argument by a quotation from your Chiliads (a work that perhaps surpasses Paradise itself in its felicity and loveliness). Your own words should convince you that there is nothing out of the way in a brother giving his name to a brother: 'if' (as you say elsewhere) 'τὸ πιθανόν, probability, holds the first place in the achievement of persuasion, and nothing is more convincing than what is said by everyone, is anything more likely to be true than that which has been approved by the consensus, the unanimous vote as it were, of so many epochs and so many people?'[25] But no one (except Erasmus alone) denies that Jude was the brother of James, no one has ever understood or interpreted the words of the evangelist differently etc.

You say that in the fourth edition you removed the annotation on Judas as the son of James. But look at what you wrote on Matthew, chapter 10 and you will find that what I said was true.[26] Farewell.

After considering the arguments and examining the passages of Scripture, if you acknowledge that you have been vanquished by the truth, I beg you by our love for one another and our love of truth to remove this source of uneasiness from those whose understanding of the facts has been muddied by your Paraphrases and Annotations. But if I have not gained the one point I hoped for, that is, if I have not satisfied your mind, then I ask you to take these efforts of mine in good part. Farewell, again.

2185 / To Ambrosius Pelargus [Freiburg, June 1529]

First published in Pelargus' *Bellaria* (Ep 2169), this letter, Erasmus' reply to Ep 2184, continues the debate between Pelargus and Eramus that began in Ep

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25 Quoted, with slight variations, from the Introduction to the *Adagia*; see CWE 31 17.

26 In all editions of the Annotations up to and including the fourth (1527) Erasmus wrote on Matt 10:3 'Jude the son of James.' In the final edition of 1535 'son' was changed to 'brother.' Cf Ep 2181 n5.

2181. See the introductions to that letter and Ep 2184 for orientation in the subject of the debate.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO HIS FRIEND AMBROSIUS PELARGUS, GREETING

My dear Pelargus, I was about to swear by all that's sacred that 'son' was not in the annotations on Matthew, for I had examined the passage two or three times. Then as I read further I found 'son' lurking there,[1] and I strangled him at once.[2] A writer who is sorry for what he wrote has retired from the battle. You convince me that it is not absurd to identify a brother by his brother's name, since a mother can be identified by the name of her son. I have not read Hegesippus. Certainly neither Eusebius nor Jerome in their careful discussions of the list of the apostles, nor Augustine in the *Quaestiones* and the *De concordia evangelistarum* call this Judas the brother of James, at least as far as I remember.

As for your arguments about the title, perhaps you have not read my remarks with sufficient attention, for I am not talking about the title that forms part of the letter, but about that which is placed at its head: 'The Epistle of Jude the Apostle.'[3] I am not inventing a third James, but this is the opinion clearly expressed by Eusebius in the *Ecclesiastical History*, book 1, chapter 14, a little before the end,[4] and more clearly in book 2, chapter 1.[5] The same position is taken by Jerome in his exposition of Isaiah, chapter 17 [:5–6].[6] And in the *Catalogue* he explains that the Epistle known to us by the name of James is the work of James the bishop, who was not an apostle, at least not one of the Twelve.[7] Nor does Hegesippus say that he was one of the Twelve. Similarly Jerome, following Eusebius, on the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter 1[:19], says that those who think that the James whom Paul saw in Galatia was the James of the Gospel, the brother of John, are badly

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1 In the annotations on Matt 10:3; see Ep 2184 n26.
2 The correction was immediately made in the *Loca quaedam*; see n16 below.
3 See Ep 2182 n10.
4 1.12 in modern texts
5 Erasmus' point is that James the Righteous, the brother of Jesus and putative author of the Epistle of James, was not one of the original Twelve (which had two members called James, one the son of Zebedee and the other the son of Alphaeus). This can be inferred from a close reading of the passages that Erasmus cites from Eusebius, but in Ep 2186:28–37 Pelargus will refuse to see the point.
6 *Commentariorum in Isaiam prophetam libri duodeviginti* 5 (on Isa 17:5–6)
7 *De viris illustribus* 2

mistaken.[8] I have read somewhere that the James known as 'the Righteous' was called 'the brother of the Lord' not because of any family relationship but because of the exceptional holiness of his life. Jerome nowhere says that the Epistle was the work of the apostle James, one of the Twelve. But he does say that some people thought it was not even written by a third James but was published under his name by someone unknown, although in the fullness of time it was accepted as one of the canonical writings.[9] Reread your texts and you will find it is so.

You demand that I produce even a single passage of Scripture where someone is called the brother of a person if he is that person's son. I am not at all sure why you ask this. Jude says he is James' brother; from this you infer he is the son of Alphaeus. I denied that it necessarily followed that anyone named as someone's brother had the same parents. You argue as though it were certain that James is the brother of Jude by the same parent. But this is the issue in dispute. My conclusion was that a surname is not formed from any kind of 'brother' whatsoever.

As for the two letters of Paul,[10] the commentators themselves explain why he omitted to name himself an apostle.[11] Moreover there has never been any doubt about these letters. That they are the work of Paul is shown by their style and by the actual contents of the letters. You take issue with individual arguments of mine. But probable propositions are not convincing if taken singly;[12] it is in combination that they establish a credible case. So I shall not examine all your arguments, especially since you have rendered the main point at issue highly probable – although so far you cite no author who has stated that Jude Lebbaeus was the brother of James the son of Alphaeus.

I have written this as a warning against publishing views that are insufficiently considered, though I am sure you do not intend to do so. Many things creep past our guard when we are not thinking; and we are often led astray by the ardour of our desire for victory. But be assured of this, that your help and interest are deeply appreciated. I would like to have sent you

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8 *Commentarii in epistulam Pauli apostoli ad Galatas* (on 1:19)
9 *De viris illustribus* 2
10 Thessalonians 1 and 2; see Epp 2184:144–6, 2186:86–8.
11 Both John Chrysostom *In epistulam 1 ad Thessalonicenses homiliae* 1:1–3 and Theophylact *Exposition of Paul's First Epistle to the Thessalonians* at 1:1 explain that Paul called himself neither 'an apostle' nor 'a servant' because the Thessalonians were newly instructed and did not know him well.
12 For 'probable propositions' Erasmus uses the Greek term εἰκότα, borrowed from Aristotelian logic; see *Prior Analytics* 2.27.

some kind of literary present, but we are waiting for the new publications from the press. In the meantime I am sending Seneca,[13] a most appropriate writer for preachers. Perhaps you possess a copy,[14] but this corrected edition has cost me unimaginable effort. However, if you prefer Irenaeus,[15] return the Seneca and I shall send it.

I shall not wait for new editions, but in the meantime I am correcting certain passages separately in Jerome, the Annotations, and the Paraphrases, especially where an emendation can be made briefly.[16] That little book will be printed within a few days. If there is anything else, we can discuss it when we meet. From the moment I received your note I have scarcely had the leisure to read it a second time: certain matters came up that require my steady and concentrated attention. Farewell, my excellent friend.

2186 / From Ambrosius Pelargus [Freiburg], 29 June 1529

First published in Pelargus' *Bellaria* (Ep 2169 introduction), this is the final instalment in the debate between Erasmus and Pelargus that began with Ep 2181. See the introductions to that letter and Ep 2184 for a brief explanation of the issues at stake in the debate.

AMBROSIUS PELARGUS TO HIS FRIEND ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Truly, to quote the proverb, you are pouring water over frogs by presenting your humble servant with a Lucius.[1] I cannot think of anything more welcome or more delightful than this literary present: it is no little thing, not to mention the appropriateness of the gift. It is true that I shall find Seneca useful, for he inspires us with the love of virtue and turns our thoughts away from sordid pleasures by his noble and challenging precepts, which

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13 Ep 2091
14 Presumably of the first edition of 1515, which Erasmus had now disowned
15 Ep 1738
16 The Latin for 'certain passages' is *loca quaedam*, which indicates that Erasmus is referring to the *Loca quaedam in aliquot Erasmi lucubrationibus per ipsum emendata*, 1529 (Ep 2095).

2186
1 Ie the second edition of Seneca, whose full name was Lucius Annaeus Seneca (Ep 2091). For the proverb, see *Adagia* III vi 16, where Erasmus explains that 'offering water to a frog' is presenting a gift that is particularly pleasing to the recipient.

made him a favourite in ancient times among those who had enlisted in the army of Christ. But what delighted me most about the gift was that it comes from you, who are no ordinary friend; and it is not that badly corrupted text, but, as you rightly say, a different work, one that is truly and evidently yours – though that hardly calls for comment from me. And why should you not claim it as your own,[2] for it was by your efforts and by the extraordinary pains you took with it that it has emerged in a purer, more correct and polished state, enriched with most enlightening notes?

I read Seneca's letters in my youth, sensing that this celebrated author would be useful to me. But it was only with difficulty that I could find my way through them and so I gave up, frustrated by their wearying obscurities. I read Irenaeus when I was staying at Basel; he too has been restored to the light of day by your saintly labours.[3] While I am glad that I read him, I am not interested in reading him again; I shall, however, look at any passage you ask me to, and examine with special care those that seem to tell on your side rather than mine.[4]

I am truly astonished at the turn our discussion has taken, for when I open and read the texts again, and search everywhere and try everything, what I find is simply what you assert – with perhaps one exception. With regard to Eusebius, either you have another Eusebius or you are imagining that there is something there that is not to be found anywhere in the text. In book 2, chapter 1 he tells us that there were two Jameses: the distinguished bishop of Jerusalem, called 'the Righteous,' who was killed by a blow from a fuller's club, and the James whom Herod slew with the sword. He makes no mention of a third. In book 1, chapter 14 we have these words: 'The Lord appeared first to Cephas, then to those two, then to more than fifty of the brethren, finally to James, one of those who are called the brethren of the Lord.'[5] And in book 2 he tells us straight out that James the Righteous was bound to Christ by ties of blood.[6] The same view is propounded by Theophylact,[7] except that the two authorities differ totally over the name of the father. But if Eusebius intended to infer from the words of the Apostle that

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2 Erasmus blamed the shortcomings of the first edition on his unfortunate decision to leave most of the work of correction to others, who proved unequal to the task; see Ep 2091:36–60.

3 Ep 1738

4 Ie in the debate about the identity of the apostle Judas

5 *Historia ecclesiastica* 1.12 in modern texts

6 *Historia ecclesiastica* 2.1

7 *Ennaratio in evangelium Marci* 14.50

James the brother of the Lord was not one of the Twelve because Paul says Christ was seen by eleven disciples (or twelve, as we read in the Greek), and then by James, by the same argument we shall remove Peter also from the roll of the apostles, since in the same text he says that Christ appeared first to Cephas, then to the Twelve.[8] You have the support of no one but Jerome, and only in one passage, where, apropos of Isaiah 17[:5–6], he writes to this effect: 'They interpret the fourteen olives as the fourteen apostles, namely the twelve chosen ones, plus James the Lord's brother as the thirteenth, and Paul the chosen vessel.'[9] But he makes no mention of a third James in his *Catalogue* nor, so far as I know, does anyone else in any passage.

It is completely beside the point to bring in Jerome's criticisms of those who think that the James whom Paul says he saw in Jerusalem was the brother of John. To the passage in Jerome commenting on Isaiah I frankly confess I have no answer, except that we need not give so much weight to Jerome that one can never disagree with him. You cite Hegesippus, whom a little earlier you denied having read, a slip of memory, I imagine.[10]

With regard to the title, I confess (for why should I hide it?) that I was not thinking very clearly. To quote the proverb, you are talking about garlic and my reply is about onions.[11] I thought you meant the title that is part of the text.[12] And yet, even if you were referring to the title above the text, the difficulty that I drew attention to nonetheless remains.

You ask why I want you to cite a passage from Scripture where a man is named as someone's brother when in fact he is that person's son. I consider it an acknowledged fact that the author of the letter inscribed with the name of Jude can be no one but Judas Lebbaeus; and Jude plainly states that he is the brother of James. You try to prove to us that he is the *son* of James with the counter-argument that in the language of Scripture 'brother' is sometimes used of any close male relative. Presumably you are making this hollow concession in order to punch Pelargus on his excessively pointed beak and make it a bit flatter, for (unless my intuition is very weak) that is what you are trying to do. Let us suppose that Judas the apostle was the author of this epistle and that he was right in

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8 1 Cor 15:5–7
9 Cf Ep 2185:19–20 with n6.
10 There is no contradiction in what Erasmus says. In Ep 2185:9, he admits that he has not read Hegesippus, but further on (lines 22–3) he refers to a passage from Hegesippus that he had already cited from Eusebius in Ep 2182:38–40.
11 *Adagia* III iv 35
12 See Ep 2182 n10.

calling himself the brother of James: does it immediately follow that he was James' full brother, since 'brother' is often used of any close male relative? You see, if I start out from that 'false concession' (which in fact is the real truth) I shall push you into a corner. For if you concede that the apostle Jude is the same person who calls himself the brother of James, and if you want him to be called a 'brother' because he was in some way related, how could he be the true-born son of James? I point out also that Scriptural usage does not allow that a man call himself someone's brother if he is really that person's son, whatever meaning we attach to the word.

Now you see that it is not without cause that I ask for a passage of Scripture. You reply that it does not necessarily follow that a man who is said to be someone's brother has the same parents as that person. True as far as it goes. But I have shown that in this passage it does necessarily follow. I do not deny that the two Epistles to the Thessalonians are Paul's, but I show where your argument leads: you are saying that it is not heretical for anyone to deny or not to believe that those epistles are by the apostle Paul.

You fume inwardly because I offer no support for my opinion. Well, you can have Rabanus, who is not so bad a commentator on Holy Scripture.[13] These are his words about James the son of Alphaeus: 'This is the James who in the Gospels and also in the Epistle to the Galatians [1:19] is called the brother of our Lord.'[14] So you have it on Rabanus' authority that he is the same man who is included in the list of the disciples in Matthew 10 and who is mentioned in Mark and Luke and also by the apostle Paul. I believe that the same man was also called 'the Righteous' and that he gained this name both on account of his father, as Remigius tells us, and from the devoutness of his life (which Eusebius attests to). It is no trouble to cite Remigius' words: 'He is properly called the son of Alphaeus, that is Alphaeus the Righteous. That he deserved this distinction is attested by the apostles who ordained him bishop of the church at Jerusalem.'[15] Also we

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13 The good Dominican Pelargus has taken both of the quotations in this paragraph, that from Remigius as well as that from Rabanus Maurus, straight out of the *Catena aurea* of Thomas Aquinas at Matthew 10:1–4. The reference to the *Ecclesiastical History* further on comes from the same source.

14 Rabanus Maurus *De universo* 4.1. The relevant Gospel passages in which James is mentioned by name as Jesus' brother are Matt 13:55 and Mark 6:3.

15 Neither Allen nor anyone else has managed to find these words in Remigius. They are, however, to be found verbatim in Rabanus Maurus *Expositio in*

find, among other things, in the *Ecclesiastical History* that he never ate flesh or drank wine or strong drink etc.[16]

Tomorrow after lunch I shall meet you wherever you say, for today I am not free to see you because of the press of business. I find what Solomon says in the Proverbs to be very true: 'Iron is sharpened by iron and a man is sharpened by meeting with a friend.'[17] For if letters passing back and forth take us so far and provide such stimulus, what energy may we not expect from the living voice? Farewell.

29 June 1529

2187 / From Bonifacius Amerbach [Basel, June–July 1529]

The autograph of this fragment of a letter (= AK Ep 1361) is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS C VIa 73 101 verso). It was first published by Allen. Given that it was addressed to Freiburg, it was most likely a letter to Erasmus and, given the date, it was presumably written in reply to Ep 2183. Remnants of wax indicate that the letter was sealed for dispatch, but it was never sent. Bonifacius afterwards used the page to make preliminary drafts of Ep 2194, the reply to Ep 2183 that Erasmus eventually received.

. . . July in the year 1 . . .[1]

Yours sincerely, Bonifacius Amerbach

What am I to write about new developments? To put it in a word, you will easily infer what hope is left to us when the Brethren may do what they please, and can do what they may, and dare to do what they can.[2]

[To Master Erasmus of Rotterdam . . .] In Freiburg

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Mattheum at 10:3, and twice in Bede: *In Marci evangelium expositio* at 3:18 and *In Lucae evangelium expositio* at 6:14–15.

16 Eusebius *Ecclesiastical History* 2.23, citing Hegesippus

17 Prov 27:17 (somewhat adapted)

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1 The Latin 'Iulias' could indicate a date in either June or July, depending on what the missing words were. If they were 'x days before the Calends of July' (1 July), the date would be in June.

2 The Latin for 'Brethren' here is *Fratres*, which often means 'Friars.' But Bonifacius, whose allegiance was to the old church, was probably referring to the members of the victorious reformed party headed by Oecolampadius, who often addressed one another as 'brother.'

2188 / To Karel Uutenhove Freiburg, 1 July 1529

Erasmus had known for some time of the execution of Louis de Berquin at Paris on 17 April 1529, and had devoted the final paragraph of his most recent letter to Willibald Pirckheimer to a brief account of it (Ep 2158:94–126). Now, however, he had received further reports of the execution, including a detailed eyewitness account from his friend Philippus Montanus (line 35). Evidently stirred by what he had learned of Berquin's courageous death and wanting to give expression to his feelings about it, Erasmus chose as the immediate recipient Karel Uutenhove (Ep 2093), who was Berquin's fellow countryman (see n16) and to whom he was in any case eager to write a letter. Then, to make sure that his feelings were known to everyone, Erasmus published the letter in the *Opus epistolarum*.

The sad tale of Berquin's three trials for heresy (1523, 1526, 1528–9) can be followed in detail in Epp 1579:200–19, 1599 introduction and n1, 1692, 1875:96–114, 2027, 2048, 2066, 2077. For a new account of the trials that corrects a number of errors in the standard works on the subject, see Farge 'Berquin.'

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO KAREL UUTENHOVE, GREETING

Dear Karel, the man who brought me news of your safe arrival in Padua removed a great load of worry from my mind. Since you left us, no one has brought a line from you or from Zebrzydowski.[1] I expect you to turn out a fine Ciceronian and a good Hellenist.

So that you may feel less badly about your leaving, let me tell you that I moved bag and baggage to Freiburg around the Ides of April.[2] The move has turned out better than I expected. When I thought about those first revolutionary changes as they unfolded day by day and wondered where they would lead, my mind foresaw no happy outcome.[3] But here I have found a climate wonderfully suited to my constitution[4] – and, if nothing else, I have escaped the likes of the Crab and Planodorp.[5]

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2188

1 Uutenhove and Andrzej Zebrzydowski had left for Italy in February; see Epp 2105–6, 2144, 2161:50–1, 2173:13–23, 2201:28–32.
2 Ep 2149 introduction
3 Ep 2097 n1
4 See Ep 2151 n1.
5 Ludovicus Carinus and Heinrich Eppendorf; see Ep 2111 nn2 and 3.

Louis Berquin in his last letter to me promised he would write to you later.[6] Do not wait in vain for his letter, for on April 16 he exchanged this world for the next;[7] he was burned in Paris in the Place de Grève.[8] So far I have been unable to ascertain anything for certain about the case. I have only heard that the authority to pass sentence was delegated to twelve judges,[9] and that as the time approached, the man had been delivered to prison. This was hardly a happy omen. The verdict was that his books should be burned, that he abjure certain articles, that his tongue be pierced with iron, and afterwards that he be imprisoned for life. When he heard this unexpectedly harsh sentence, he appealed to the king and the pope. The judges were upset at the very mention of an appeal and said, 'If you do not accept this sentence, we shall see to it that you will not appeal anywhere again.' On the next day they pronounced sentence that he be consigned to the flames. They say the first charge against him was his statement that it would benefit the church if the sacred texts were translated into the vernacular and read by the people, something the Parlement had forbidden to happen.[10] Hundreds of armed guards were brought in to control any disturbance that might arise. My informant was not able to give me any other definite news except that Budé, who was, I believe, one of the judges, had pleaded with Berquin three days before his condemnation to abandon his foolish errors (as he called them) and come to his senses. But I only heard this – in fact from a man whose evidence was largely hearsay.

Our friend Montanus, whose scrupulous honesty you know, did not venture to write anything that he had not witnessed close up with his own eyes.[11] He was very near Berquin when he was being conveyed in a cart to the place of execution. Neither by his expression nor by any gesture of his body did he give any evidence of agitation. You would have thought he

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6 Berquin's last letter was Ep 2066; the promise to write to Uutenhove must have been in the lost portion of it. It is clear from Ep 2077:77 that Berquin had mentioned him.

7 The actual date was 17 April, which Erasmus had managed to get right in Ep 2158:95.

8 For over two centuries the Place de Grève had been used for executions. It is now the Place de l'Hôtel de Ville.

9 See Ep 2158 n17 and cf Ep 2133 n6.

10 *Bourgeois de Paris* 232–3 summarizes the content of the decree and dates it at 5 February 1526.

11 The eyewitness account of Philippus Montanus (Ep 2065 introduction) was Erasmus' main source for this account.

was in his library musing over his studies or in church reflecting on heavenly things. Not even at the moment when the menacing voice of the executioner pronounced the charge and the penalty did he appear to change the steadfast expression on his face. When bidden to get down from the cart, he did so smartly without delay. Nor did he show any of that bluster or arrogance that brutishness sometimes breeds in criminals. Before he died he addressed a few words to the populace, but from a distance where no one could hear them on account of the loud uproar from the guards, which it is thought was deliberately provoked. When he was strangled at the stake, no one in the crowd shouted out the name of Jesus, as usually happens even in the case of murderers and heretics. The hearts of everyone had been stirred up against him by people whose presence is felt everywhere and who have great power over the simple and the uneducated. So go now if you are brave enough and annoy these Phormios![12]

A Franciscan was with him, whom Montanus approached, hoping to find out if even at the point of death he had acknowledged his error. The Franciscan maintained that he had done so and asserted that he himself had no doubt at all that Berquin's soul had found peace.[13] But I have no faith in the Franciscan's words, especially since it is usual with them after a man has been executed to spread rumours that in the midst of the fire he had sung a palinode.[14] In this way they hope to rob a man of any praise for standing by his beliefs and to escape the hostility of the multitude and their suspicions that the charge was false. At Brussels, as a sort of offering of the first fruits, they burned two Augustinian monks and sent a third to prison, where he was secretly murdered. But after the victims had met their death with remarkable constancy, which produced a reaction of bitter hostility towards the judges, these people spread the ridiculous rumour that one of the dead men had appeared to a certain Augustinian with the news that their souls were safe, since at the last moment, presumably when they were already in the fire, they had come to their senses, and that this had come about through

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12 Erasmus clearly means the friars. Phormio is the typical parasite of Roman comedy, as in Terence's play, so the reference fits the image of begging friars as parasites. But the Phormio encountered in Cicero *De oratore* 2.75 (and 2.77) is an incompetent peripatetic philosopher who likes to lecture people on matters that he really does not understand. That too would fit the image of the friars here.

13 Similarly, *Bourgeois de Paris* 322 says of the death of Berquin: 'toutesfois il mourut repentant.'

14 Ie made a retraction; *Adagia* I ix 59

the intercession of the Virgin Mother. They were burned on the eve of the Visitation, and Nicolaas the Carmelite had enthusiastically taken charge of the immolation.[15] When the executioner was asked if he had heard any expression of penitence on the pyre, he said he had not; on the contrary, when they were led to the stake they testified in a loud voice that they were dying as Christians, and when they were tied to the stake and the fire was brought to them, they began to chant the creed and after that the doxology 'We praise thee, O God' until the flames stifled the sound of their voice.

Now you know the fate of your fellow countryman Berquin,[16] a fate to which he seemed to me destined from birth. I cannot pronounce judgment on his case, since I know absolutely nothing about it. If he did not deserve his punishment, I grieve for him; if he did, I grieve twice over, for it is better to die innocent than guilty. One thing I am sure of, that he was convinced he was defending a righteous cause. Hence the remarkable composure of his face. But as you are aware, I never met the man in person. I did make careful inquiries about some details of his story from men who were better acquainted with him, some of whom were not sympathetic to him in regard to his case. They told me that he was about forty years old, was lord of the Berquin region with a modest income of six hundred crowns per year,[17] a layman and a bachelor, and that he lived such an innocent life that he never gave rise to even the slightest rumour of impropriety. He was wonderfully kind to his friends and to the needy, a faithful observer of the rites and ordinances of the church: the prescribed fasts, holy days, dietary laws, the mass, sermons, and all other observances that are conducive to godliness. He was completely free from any kind of pretence, of a straight and generous temperament that neither sought to injure another nor was prepared to suffer injury from anyone, at least if it was serious. He had little sympathy for the teachings of Luther. To sum it up, they found nothing in his life that did not become a good Christian. They thought his most serious fault was his open hostility towards certain captious monks and theologians, men

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15 This incident took place on 1 July 1523; see Ep 1384 n2. On Nicolaas Baechem, known as Egmondanus, see Ep 1254 n6.

16 Berquin and Uutenhove were both from Flanders.

17 Presumably these 'crowns' were not the new English double-rose crowns (worth 5s 0d each) but the older French *écus à la couronne au soleil*, worth 40s or £2 tournois and 56d sterling. If the latter, this 'modest income' was equivalent to Alciati's 'huge salary' at the University of Bourges; see Epp 2168:30–1, 2194 n4; CWE 12 650 Table 3D.

as savage as they are stupid. He stormed against these people publicly and was unable to hide his indignation.

He had had in the past some kind of quarrel with the theologian Guillaume Duchesne.[18] This was the start of the war. Soon afterwards from a little book (which, I believe, he had published) the theologians made a selection of opinions that seemed to bear on matters of faith and thus to come under their jurisdiction.[19] As far as I remember, they were of this sort: 'In a sermon it is improper to call on the Blessed Virgin instead of the Holy Spirit, nor should she be called 'the fountain of all grace';[20] and 'In the evening anthem, contrary to the usage of Scripture, she is called our hope and our life, when these terms are more appropriate to the Son.'[21] On silly charges like these he was thrown into prison and stood trial for heresy. When the judges realized that the case was insignificant, they acquitted him. His accusers put it about that he had escaped through the favour of the king. He himself claimed to have won by right and he began to prepare a little book to celebrate his triumph.[22]

It was at this stage that he first came to my notice. He wrote to me about his case[23] and about the prejudiced verdict that Duchesne and Béda had passed on some of my books.[24] From his letter he struck me as a decent man. I advised him frankly and courteously that if he were wise he would suppress his panegyrics, let the hornets alone, and devote himself to the pleasures of his studies.[25] I warned him not to involve me in his case, for that would be disadvantageous to both of us. But he had something in common with a palm tree in that the more one tried to hold him back, the more he resisted.[26] Time and again I sang the same old song, but to deaf ears, and all that I prophesied eventually came true. I did not, however,

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18 Until his death in 1525, Duchesne (Ep 2043 n1) had been one of Noël Béda's chief allies in the Paris faculty of theology's campaign against Erasmus and others.

19 Presumably one of Berquin's original works, none of which survive

20 Cf Epp 1581:526–36, 2082:285–9.

21 The evening anthem is the *Salve regina*, sung at the end of the daily liturgy of the hours from Trinity Sunday to Advent, and the phrase referred to is 'vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.'

22 Cf Ep 2158:109–10. No such book exists.

23 The letter is mentioned in Ep 1599:1–3, but it is not extant.

24 Béda's examination of Erasmus' writings had got under way in January 1524; see Ep 1571 introduction.

25 This letter is not extant.

26 On the proverbial resistence of the palm to pressure see *Adagia* I iii 4.

expect so terrible an outcome, though I certainly expected serious trouble. Books emerged from the press, printed secretly, in which he had inserted some ideas of his own into translations of my works. When I realized this, I remonstrated in stronger terms with him,[27] pointing out that he was not acting wisely; that misbegotten translations of that sort were exciting bitter hostility towards both himself and me while doing nothing to promote godliness; that it was not the action of a friend to make things worse for me when I was already carrying a heavy enough burden; that if he found pleasure in such quarrels, he should realize that nothing was less pleasurable to me. I urged him, therefore, to plead his case without involving me.

He replied characteristically that I was completely on the wrong track, since the antagonism could only be checked by allowing ordinary people to read my works.[28] Then they would discover the flagrant mendacity of some of the monks, for it was their slanders, trickery, whisperings, and evil schemes that had inflamed the minds of the majority against me. He cited the case of a bishop, not a bad man but ill educated, whom they had turned against me so violently that he could not even bear to hear the name Erasmus. He said he had translated the *Complaint of Peace* into French for the bishop, who was so taken with it that he began to be well disposed towards us and to abominate our accusers.[29]

Meantime some of Béda's clique compiled a number of articles of indictment and had the man thrown into prison again.[30] Berquin sent several of these to me along with the criticisms of the judges.[31] Unless I am mistaken, the judges were three monks, a Carthusian prior, a prior of the Celestines, and a third whom I do not know.[32] I sent him my reply, declar-

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27 Ep 1599

28 The letter is not extant.

29 Cf Ep 2077:28–9. The identity of the unnamed bishop is unknown.

30 This was in January 1526. On the articles of indictment, see Ep 1692:46–50. Neither Béda nor any of the other Paris theologians had anything to do with the indictment, though they were doubtless happy to learn of it. Berquin was denounced to the Parlement of Paris by the archbishop of Amiens; see Farge 'Berquin' 57–8.

31 Cf Epp 1679:59–61, 1692:80–4.

32 In Ep 1692:61–3, Berquin seems to indicate that three monks, one of them a Carthusian, had been brought in to testify against him. Erasmus, perhaps misconstruing what Berquin had said, here and elsewhere (Epp 1875:101–4, 2158:115–17) erroneously identifies the three monks as Berquin's 'judges.' The only judges involved at the time were three of the original four 'judges delelegate,' all of them diocesan priests (two of them members of the Parlement, one a Paris theologian). See Ep 1875 n33.

ing that I saw nothing there that was impious.[33] He then sent me some new points of controversy, and I replied to those ideas that he had taken from my books; to those he had advanced on his own, I made no response. To cut a long story short, the monks pronounced definitive sentence upon him in prison;[34] all that remained now was to have his books burned and to require him to recant and accept the penalty prescribed by the monks (their penalties are never anything but harsh); should he refuse, he would go to the stake. On not a single point did this brave man give in to them,[35] and he would have perished had not some more sensible men in the Parlement realized that the origin of the affair lay in the burning hostility of monks and Bédaists, and in their response stated that they wished to review the whole case from start to finish,[36] a decision that caused an uproar from those who had pronounced the verdict, for they considered this development the equivalent of a reversal of the sentence. It is thought that this turn in the case was brought about through the favourable intervention of the king's mother.[37]

Just when all this was going on, the king returned from Spain.[38] As soon as he was alerted to the danger facing his friend Berquin from the monks and the Bédaists, he warned the Parlement first by personal messenger and then by letter not to let any rash action be taken against his counsellor;[39] he let them know that he would arrive shortly and wanted to investigate the whole business thoroughly. Some time later Berquin was released from prison and held in a very commodious hall, still, however, under guard. Finally he was set free so that he could more easily prepare his case.[40] At that point he became remarkably self-confident. He anticipated not

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33 No reply to Berquin survives, but for Erasmus' comments to Béda on these matters, see Epp 1664, 1717:22–30.

34 On 23 March 1526 he was found guilty of being a relapsed heretic; see Ep 1685:91–4.

35 See Ep 1692:9–13, 51–2.

36 See Ep 1692:66–70.

37 See Ep 1692:60–1, 71–2.

38 In March 1526; see Ep 1692 n9.

39 Although Berquin enjoyed the patronage of Francis I's mother (Louise of Savoy) and sister (Marguerite of Angoulême) and exercised the office of *lieutenant des eaux et forêts au pays de Picardie*, none of that qualified him to be considered a 'counsellor' of the king.

40 Here again, Erasmus has the details wrong. During his second trial and for a time thereafter, Berquin was housed in the most commodious room of the prison known as the Conciergerie du Palais (the room reserved for princes and other high-ranking personages). But after he was released, on 19 November

Louise of Savoy as Prudence
From F. Demoulins *Traité des vertus*
MS fr 12247 fol 4 recto, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

just an acquittal, but a victory, indeed a spectacular victory. He kept saying that victory was within his grasp, but he preferred it to come somewhat later so that his triumph would be all the more complete.[41] Soon, with a reversal of roles, he levelled a charge of heresy against the most sacred faculty itself, the monks, and the Bédaists, for he had happened upon some secrets in their proceedings.[42]

The more Berquin let himself go, the more I feared for him. So in a series of letters I urged him to extricate himself from the case even if he had to resort to some trumped up excuse:[43] for example, his friends might arrange to have him sent on a long journey under the pretext of a royal delegation; perhaps the theologians might then permit the case to languish, though they would never be willing to admit the charge of impiety that he had launched against them. I told him to reflect again and again on the sort of monster Béda was, how many heads he had, all breathing fire; he should realize he was fighting against an immortal enemy, for a faculty does not die.[44] At the same time he should consider that in making war on three monks[45] he was taking on a whole army that is not just wealthy and influential but utterly unscrupulous and expert at every kind of chicanery; they would not rest until they had brought about his destruction, even if his case were more solid than that of Christ. It would be folly to put too much trust in help from the king. The favours of princes are transient, and their feelings are easily turned around by the clever tricks of informers. Finally, he should bear in mind that even if none of this happens, great princes are worn down by the sheer wickedness of men like these or are sometimes forced out of fear to give in. It is not safe to despise an enemy, however weak, much less a gang who are as numerous as they are powerful. I begged him, if he cared nothing for his own safety, to recognize that he had an obligation, as an honest and scholarly man, to preserve himself in the interests of learning and for the sake of his friends, on whose heads would fall a heavy weight of opprobrium if things turned out otherwise than we wished. If none of these arguments moved him, then at least he should plead

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1526, he was kept under house arrest in the Palais du Louvre for about six weeks (Ep 1875 n33), at which point he was taken into the service of the king of Navarre, whom the king's sister Marguerite had married in January 1527 (*Bourgeois de Paris* 380).

41 See Epp 2066:29–30, 2077:33–4.

42 In 1527; see Ep 1875:101–14.

43 The letters are not extant.

44 Cf Ep 1875:111–13.

45 See n32 above.

his case on his own, for I had no wish to squabble with legions of monks or with the faculty of theology if I could avoid it.

Do you want to know what I achieved? Well, all my efforts to deter him simply increased his resolution. He continued to attack the monks and theologians and especially the syndic Béda with all the licence of the Old Comedy – I could almost hear the victor's song before the victory.[46] Soon the king agreed to ban distribution of Béda's attack on Lefèvre and me.[47] Also a letter was obtained from the king instructing the faculty of theology to examine twelve articles in Béda's writings that had all the appearance of impiety – and indeed of blasphemy – and either to condemn them by a unanimous vote or to prove them acceptable on the clear evidence of Scripture.[48] These developments seemed to Berquin to promise certain victory; I replied that on the contrary they would simply irritate the enemy, who were wild enough on their own.[49] The king's tepid edict[50] even proved a setback to Lefèvre's cause and my own, since it resulted in the book circulating secretly and ending up only in the hands of our enemies; moreover, to save the printer from financial loss, it was exported to Germany and England. I told Berquin he was very wrong if he believed his opponents could be crushed by such feeble measures.

I achieved nothing by my warnings except that his confidence grew steadily stronger. Meanwhile an edict was issued by the rector of the university forbidding professors in the colleges to use my *Colloquies* in their lectures to students.[51] At this point Berquin imagined that I would be stung by such insolent behaviour into making common cause with him. He prevailed on someone to write me a strongly worded letter urging the same message, that victory was within their grasp and that this was the moment to strip the theologians of all authority for the future.[52] I replied to both of them that I was taken aback by their attitude, for they seemed to believe

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46 The Attic 'Old Comedy' of Aristophanes and others was celebrated for the freedom with which prominent contemporaries were vilified, ridiculed, and parodied (eg Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds*).

47 The king banned further sale of Béda's *Annotationes* against Lefèvre and Erasmus in August 1526; see Epp 1722 introduction, 1875:89–90.

48 On the king's letter (c 7 July 1527) and the twelve articles, see Ep 1902 introduction.

49 See Ep 2077:21–3.

50 See n47 above.

51 On 23 June 1528; see Ep 2037 introduction. The rector in question was not Bertinus Myss, as Allen indicates, but Nicolas Boissel; see Ep 2037 n23.

52 The 'someone' was perhaps Pierre Toussain; see Epp 2042:2–16, 2048 n23.

that I was ready to spend the rest of my life battling with the faculty of theology to the neglect of everything else.[53] In fact I was much more inclined to let my books be unfairly condemned by them than to engage in an endless war at a time in my life when I needed peace and quiet, and that if the decision rested with me, I would choose to make everyone pay the utmost deference to the authority of theologians in preference to a situation where no one trusted them in anything.[54]

In every letter I rammed home my opinion that I could foresee no happy outcome, however satisfied with himself Berquin might be. I realized that his hopes remained unshaken, but was terribly afraid that they were seriously misplaced; he had great self-confidence, but it rested on a treacherous foundation. I begged him, if he valued his life, to take thought for himself. It would be better to seek refuge somewhere, perhaps in Germany, where no fuss is made over articles of that sort, not even by strict believers, so long as no one makes a public profession of his views and stirs up the people. I added that for a long time now I regretted our friendship, which had brought me more trouble than the deadly hostility of many of my foes.

My constant harping on these themes got me nowhere. Afterwards, however, his letters became less frequent and more chilly. I think he had a presentiment that not everything was turning out in accordance with his high hopes. I was saddened by the man's fate. As I said before, I am not familiar with his case, but if he was in error, it was not out of malice that he went astray but from conviction. But what can one do with a man who is bent on his own death and, as the saying goes, is fetching trouble for himself on his own beast?[55] He was taken in by his self-confidence and harmed by his candour; nor was less harm done by the foolish excitement of some of those around him, who become elated and triumphant on the slightest provocation. While Berquin's death has helped to restrain these people, yet the danger exists that it will overexcite the followers of Béda, who are already mad enough on their own. There are distinctions of various kinds to be made between errors and heresies; there is considerable difference between a man who has been led astray by persuasion and someone who holds an impious doctrine with malevolent obstinacy. Again, it matters whether someone goes astray by himself or forms a faction and disturbs the public peace. It sets a strange precedent to send a man to the stake for a mistake in judgment – I wonder where the idea came from. I would greatly esteem the religious temper of the French if it were as strong in its spiritual judgment

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53 Epp 2042, 2048; cf Ep 2053:3–5.

54 Cf Ep 2048:45–7.

55 Ie is the author of his own misfortunes; *Adagia* I i 50

as it is inclined nowadays towards a blind adherence to tradition. Certainly up to this point they have shown themselves honest servants of the Roman pontiff; they deserve to be blessed with excellent princes, but they serve in good faith whoever comes along. Perhaps it is better to err in this direction than to exercise that unbridled licence which we observe in several German cities. There the pope is regarded as Antichrist, cardinals as the creatures of Antichrist, bishops as demons, priests as pigs, monasteries as the conventicles of Satan, and princes as tyrants. Control rests with the evangelical mob, who are armed and better prepared to fight than to enter into discussion.

This is all I can tell you about Berquin. If he died with a good conscience, as I very much hope, then what could be better than that? To be condemned, quartered, hanged, burned, beheaded, these are the fates of good and evil men alike. To condemn, quarter, crucify, burn, behead, these are the actions of good judges as well as of pirates and tyrants. Various are the judgments of men. Happy is the man who is found innocent before the judgment of God. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 1 July 1529

2189 / To William, duke of Cleves Freiburg, 1 July 1529

This is the preface to *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* (Basel: Froben, Herwagen, and Episcopius, September 1529).

William V of Cleves (1516–92) was the son and heir of Duke John III (Ep 829:14n), who in 1521 had become the first duke to unite under one rule the two conglomerations of territories on the Lower Rhine known as Cleves-Mark on the one hand and Jülich-Berg-Ravensberg on the other. William would succeed his father as ruler of the United Duchies in 1539. In the preceding year, William had already succeeded Karel van Egmond (Ep 1998 n7) as duke of Gelderland. This, however, brought him into conflict with Charles V, who had a competing claim to the duchy. William tried to maintain his claim in alliance with Francis I of France and the Lutheran League of Schmalkalden. But in 1543 he was soundly defeated by the emperor, in consequence of which he had to surrender his claim to Gelderland, withdraw from his alliances with Francis I and the German Lutherans, and enter into a close alliance with the Hapsburgs that was sealed by his marriage to a daughter of Ferdinand of Austria. In 1566, William suffered a stroke from which he never recovered, though he lingered for many years, becoming increasingly helpless.

Meanwhile, the connection between Erasmus and the court of the United Duchies had long been a close one. Under the influence of his Erasmian counsellors, Johann von Vlatten (Ep 1390), Johann Gogreve (Allen Ep 2298:10n), and Konrad Heresbach (Ep 1316), Duke John III had pursued a policy of moderate Catholic reform in which Lutherans were treated leniently but Anabaptists

VON · GOTTES · GENADEN · WILHELM · HERTZOG · ZV · IVLICH · GELRE · CLEVE · BERGE ·
GRAFF · ZVR · MARCK · ZV · ZVTPHEN · VD · RAVESPVRG · HER · ZV · RAVENSTEYN ·
BIS · DVO · LVSTRA · VIDENS · ET · VITÆ · QVATTVOR · ANNOS
TALIS · IVLIACI · DVX · GVILIELMVS · ERAT ·
ASPICIS · EXANGVEM · VIVENTIS · IMAGINIS · UMBRAM ·
MORES · ET · VITAM · NVLLA · TABELLA · REFERT ·
TOT · IVVENIS · VIRTVTE · SVA · SIBI · REGNA · PARAVIT ·
QVOT · MODO · THEVTONIDOS · NVLLVS · IN · ORBE · PLAGÆ
NVLLI · IVSTICIA · NVLLI · PIETATE · SECVNDVS ·
SE · VETERVM · DOCVIT · LAVDIBVS · ESSE · PAREM ·
INNOCVAM · VITÆ · DECORAT · SAPIENTIA · LAVDEM ·
PRÆCIPVE · IN · CHRISTVM · NON · SIMVLATA · FIDES ·
QVOD · SI · VITÆ · NOVÆ · POTVISSET · ESSE · TABELLÆ ·
QVOD · PETERE · MAIN · MVM · FORMA · FVTVRA · FVIT ·
HINRICVS · ALDEGREVER · SVZATIEN · FACIEBAT ·
ANNO · M · D · XL ·

William v, duke of Cleves
Heinrich Aldegraver
Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris

were not. The church ordinance that John promulgated in 1532–3 stipulated that preaching was to be based on Scripture and the early Fathers and to be free of polemics, provided for better training and supervision of the parish clergy, and enjoined the maintenance of broadly formulated Catholic doctrines and traditional ceremonies (see Albrecht Pius Luttenberger *Glaubenseinheit und Reichsfriede* [Göttingen 1982] 116–24). It was a thoroughly Erasmian ordinance, the implementation and enforcement of which were a matter of consultation with Erasmus (Epp 2728, 2804, 2845). Moreover, Erasmus was repeatedly invited to settle in Cleves (see eg Ep 2146), and in 1533 Duke John granted him an annuity (Ep 2804). As for Duke William, he was more personally inclined towards Lutheranism than his father had been but, beholden to the Hapsburgs and isolated from alliance with either France or the German Lutherans, his only real option was to continue the Erasmian ecclesiastical policies of his father. The spread of Lutheranism, however, particularly in the cities and among the nobility, was not checked, and Charles v upbraided William for this in 1548. After Charles' abdication and the formal recognition (1555) of the constitutional right of the German territorial princes to determine the religion of their territories, William displayed even greater tolerance for Lutherans. But the adherents of the old and the new religions were so evenly divided in the duchies that in 1567–8 William's counsellors, including Heresbach, successfully lobbied against modification of the church order of 1532–3.

The volume in which this letter appeared was sent to Duke William in October (Allen Ep 2222:26–7). He responded with a letter of thanks that was accompanied by the gift of a silver cup (Ep 2234). Erasmus in turn dedicated his *Apophthegmata* to the duke in 1531 (Ep 2431).

An annotated translation of this letter by Beert C. Verstraete has already been published in CWE 26 295–6. The present translator and editor have borrowed liberally from that version.

TO THE MOST ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE WILLIAM, DUKE OF CLEVES, JÜLICH, AND BERG, COUNT OF MARK AND RAVENSBERG, ETC FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

Distinguished prince, Konrad Heresbach, a man of exceptional accomplishments, who, to the great furtherance of the common good, became your instructor when you were still a boy,[1] has often in his letters painted such a vivid portrait of your character, with its natural leaning towards both piety and learning, that I could not have become better acquainted with you if

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2189

1 In 1523; see Ep 1316 introduction.

I had shared your company for several months. It is a mark of his great affection for you, which breathes in every line of his letters,[2] that he kept pressing me with a host of arguments to immortalize your name in some literary composition as an encouragement to you in the beautiful course you are pursuing – spurring on, as the saying goes, a galloping horse[3] – and also as a challenge to other young men of distinguished lineage to imitate your fine example. Far from shrinking from this task, I considered the suggestion a kindness. If I have put off fulfilling my obligation for several years, it is because I could not find a subject that did some sort of justice to your exalted position; for it was obvious from the way in which Heresbach framed his request that he would not be satisfied with just any sort of offering. So when nothing occurred to me of the kind that I wanted, I came in the end to regret my promise. I thought I was beginning to resemble those impoverished but crafty clients who, if they owe a substantial sum that they cannot repay, try to soften their patrons with little gifts from the garden in the hope of making them more ready to accept a deferred settlement; in this way they try to show that it was not the will that failed to match the means, but the means that did not match the will.

During my stay in Italy I drafted a work *De copia verborum ac rerum*.[4] By way of illustration I added a theme, which was first presented in brief summary terms, and then developed more copiously and in greater detail.[5] The person at Rome to whom I gave the manuscript for copying returned this portion in a mutilated state, hardly amounting to one-half of the original. What survived might just as well have been lost.[6] Later, after being repeatedly urged by learned friends to complete the work as a stimulus to learning, which at that time seemed to be in the doldrums, I forced myself, much against my inclination, to look at the outline, which set out the various themes that supported the whole argument, like the columns of a building. This led me to take the task in hand again and bring it to completion. Think of this only as a modest present, a gift of cherries. I have added two minor works that have not as yet been published;[7] think of these only as two quinces picked in a poor man's garden. I am not offering these rustic

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2 Not extant
3 *Adagia* I ii 47
4 For the genesis of this work on abundant style, see Ep 260 introduction.
5 The theme was the liberal education of children, which Erasmus used to demonstrate the process of rhetorical amplification, the subject of *De copia*.
6 Cf Ep 1341A:1315–20.
7 The *Liber de apologia David* and *De David interpellatione*, both attributed to St Ambrose; see Epp 2076 introduction, 2190.

gifts, my noble young friend, in the hope of meeting my obligation, but only with the intention of giving some evidence of my desire to do so. Indulgent creditors are less likely to press a claim against their debtors if these constantly admit their indebtedness and thus, as it were, call themselves to account; debtors who conceal their indebtedness give the impression that they are planning to repudiate the debt. However, it is really Heresbach to whom I should plead my case, who, on the strength of our agreement, might very well have launched a suit against me. But I have preferred to deal with you, knowing that you would be fairer towards me even in a case where your own interests are involved than he would be in a case that is not his own. He has such a great affection for you and is so zealous for your welfare, your rank, and your position that if the occasion ever arose he would not hesitate to set aside all his natural reserve to further your interests. Therefore, my noble prince, persevere in this glorious campaign, so that he may illuminate your Highness with his teaching and you may do honour to his teaching with the radiant aura of your good fortune and position.

I shall not take pains to commend this little book to you except to say that it is new and entirely my own and that it shows how to express much in a few words, a style of speaking that is eminently suited to persons of high rank. (I have given only a single example;[8] more can be found in St Augustine, who sometimes summarizes a psalm with admirable brevity, and then elaborates it with a great profusion of ideas and language.)[9] Finally, this method of teaching is especially suited to the children of rulers; for they need above all a sound moral training, and this need is fulfilled only by a liberal education. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 1 July 1529

2190 / To William, duke of Cleves Freiburg, 1 July 1529

This is the preface to two short works, *Liber de apologia David* and *De interpellatione David*, both attributed to St Ambrose, which Erasmus published with *De pueris instituendis* (Ep 2189). Martin Lips had tried to persuade Erasmus that the works were genuine but, now and later, he refused to be persuaded. Modern scholars agree with Lips. For details, see Ep 2076 introduction.

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8 The book opens with a concise declamation on the subject of the title. In the CWE translation, it fills a page and a half (CWE 26 297–8). Then follow forty-nine pages (CWE 26 298–346) of 'The same argument fully developed.'

9 Volume 8 of the new edition of Augustine (Ep 2157) contained the *Enarrationes in psalmos*.

TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE WILLIAM, DUKE OF CLEVES, JÜLICH-BERG, COUNT OF MARK AND RAVENSBERG, ETC FROM ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, GREETING

We are both habitual hunters, distinguished prince, you in the dark woods and I in old libraries. It was there that I recently found two books testifying on the title-page to the authorship of St Ambrose,[1] yet while they are very close in their language to the style of Ambrose, so successful is the imitation that they outstrip their model in several points. The author's explanations are clearer and there are fewer digressions; and he is not inferior to the admirable Ambrose in the aptness and frequency of his citations of Scripture or in the piety of his sentiments or the charm of his allusions or the sharpness of his caustic wit – that at least is my opinion. I believe that this man is also the author of the two books 'On the Calling of the Gentiles' that have come down to us under the name of Ambrose.[2] Oh how fortunate we would be if theologians, a good part of whom now grow old in sophistical logic-chopping, were to devote themselves to exercises of this kind, preparing themselves in the shrines of sacred learning for preaching in the church! For no one can speak unless he has thoroughly studied, imbibed, and digested Holy Scripture and has become so familiar with it through constant use that it seems a part of his nature.

Here, most honoured prince, you have two heroic figures,[3] both examples of outstanding godliness: one of whom God allowed to lapse into grave sin so that through him he might show all men, and especially all princes, the remedy of repentance; the other he permitted to be stripped of all his resources, bereft of his children and his grandchildren, and tormented with dreadful sores over his body so that through him he might reveal the nature of unshaken endurance. David's calamity was heavier to bear than Job's, for Job was robbed of externals but kept the best of all possessions – a good conscience. But David, who abandoned the love of God, suffered a greater blow than if he had lost the whole world along with his

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2190

1 Here Erasmus does not mention, perhaps because he had been asked not to, that Martin Lips had sent him manuscripts of the works in question. See Ep 2076 introduction.

2 These Erasmus had included in volume 2 of his edition of Ambrose (Ep 1855), deeming them spurious but still theologically valuable. Cf Ep 2197:133–5.

3 David and Job. The *De interpellatione David* printed with *De pueris instituendis* was the missing second book of *De interpellatione Job et David libri quatuor*, books 1, 2, and 4 of which had been published in Erasmus' edition of Ambrose (Ep 1855). There is nothing about Job in the material presented 'here.'

own life. So David, weeping piteously and without end, warns us to be on our guard lest we lose any part of that precious possession. Job, in giving thanks, shows that a man should neither exult in great prosperity nor faint amid the storms of fortune, however trying they may be, provided that this one thing remains safe that alone makes a man happy and cannot be taken from us except through our own fault.

I trust that Christ will so guide your excellent nature that you will suffer neither the tears of David nor the misfortunes of Job. Yet the wise man should fortify and equip his mind for all the chances that may befall a human being. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 1 July 1529

2191 / To Karel Sucket

Freiburg, 2 July 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is one of the two letters that constitute the surviving correspondence between Erasmus and Sucket; the other is Ep 2356.

Karel Sucket of Bruges, c 1506–1532, was the son of Erasmus' friend Antoon (I) Sucket (Ep 1331 n11) and a kinsman of Karel Uutenhove (Ep 2093). Because of his friendship with Karel's father, Erasmus had followed with interest the boy's progress from an early age (Ep 1556:41–6). Karel matriculated at Louvain in January 1519 and his presence at the College of the Lily in 1524–5 is documented (see Allen's introduction). He subsequently took a licentiate in law at Orleans, and by 1529 he was pursuing his legal studies at Dôle with his close friend Viglius Zuichemus (Ep 2101). From there he corresponded with Erasmus (Epp 2135:8–9 and 2141:7) and for a time considered moving to Freiburg to study with the great jurist Udalricus Zasius. In the end, however, he went to Bourges to study with Andrea Alciati (Ep 1250), who presented him for his doctorate in October 1530. Soon thereafter he went off to Italy, where he was appointed to a lectureship in law at Turin. But by late 1531 he had fallen ill and on 3 November 1532 he died (Allen Ep 2753:26–8).

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO KAREL SUCKET, GREETING

Your letter, my dearest Karel, breathed such a wonderful spirit of friendliness, or to put it more accurately, of devotion towards me, that I could recognize at once a true son of Antoon Sucket. Since of your own free will you have taken over his affection for me, it is only fair that I in turn should reciprocate this affection by a mutually shared devotion. So my dear Karel, be assured of this: you will ask nothing of me that I shall begrudge doing for you provided it seems to be for your benefit or conducive to your honour, and if it should happen that I lacked the power to help, at least there should

never be any doubt about the will. So continue as you have begun, my excellent young friend, and bring back Antoon to us exactly as he was. While I have good reason for feeling his death most deeply, I can at the same time rejoice that in some way he lives on in you. For in facial expression, physical make-up, gestures, and speech you resemble him so closely that I think of you not as his son but as the man himself made young again in you. There is the same integrity of mind and character, the same civility, the same loyalty towards friends, the same openness and respect for the truth. You are alike even in your judgments, which in your case will mature with time.

But there is one point in which you seem likely even to surpass your distinguished father, which I know will delight his spirit greatly. And how could this not be so, since during all his life it was his dearest wish that in his children he would see himself outdone? Do I hear you asking 'In what way'? In the fact that you are striving to combine the glory of the two languages with a consummate mastery of the law. For if the student of law does not also acquire competence in languages, (God!) what foolish babble, what shameful errors, what fatuous nonsense are likely to attend this kind of study!

Many people thought highly of Joost,[1] who rose from being an imperial councillor to become president of the grand council of Mechelen. He thought there was nothing he did not know in his chosen field. Such amour-propre is perhaps tolerable. What is not tolerable is the fact that at every dinner party, even without provocation, he would mount his soapbox and inveigh against languages and humane letters; he would not concede that anyone skilled in the humanities could understand a single provision of the law. The case of Guillaume Budé was sometimes held up to him.[2] What a flood that produced – but it was so silly that no one could refrain from laughing. Joost possessed a deep knowledge of the law: what he lacked was natural judgment. A man cannot avoid constantly talking rubbish if he knows nothing but the literature of that one subject, especially since the texts for that discipline are not only highly corrupt but also mutilated. Some of these obstacles have been removed by Udalricus Zasius in Germany, Guillaume Budé in France, and Andrea Alciati in Italy.

Everything favoured your father except the times he lived in; he possessed a remarkably fine mind, exceptional industry, vast erudition, and exquisite judgment. It was not long, however, before court business and

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2191

1 Joost Lauwereyns (d 1527); see Epp 1299, 1717:19–21, 1747:25–30.

2 Ep 403

frequent and lengthy legations (I nearly called them 'relegations')[3] allowed him to do little more than maintain an affection for these studies – otherwise even in old age he would have turned to the field of letters. He never envied others what he himself did not have; rather he worked all the harder to join the profession of law with competence in languages and polite letters. So I urge you, my dearest Sucket, to keep to the same track and continue to run a strong race, as you have done so far with great distinction.

You have a tough competitor in Viglius,[4] whose enthusiasm will not permit you to grow slack. I understand that you are planning to move,[5] and I am sure you have settled on a sensible plan, so there is no call for me to persuade or dissuade you. Your own native wit[6] will suggest what is best for you. Fortune is driving Viglius from one place to another.[7] Now he has become a sort of Ulysses. That there is plague at Avignon and Montpellier is nothing new. He was then strongly attracted to Bourges, mainly because Alciati is there,[8] a scholar who stands out as the miracle of our age and the darling of sound learning. But they say that this region too is infested with the plague, which gives me cause to worry, not just for the students there but also for Alciati. He is someone who fully deserves every good fortune, but for some years now it appears that Fate has treated him as a football, tossing him back and forth, now by war, now by plague. If this rumour is baseless, I am happy for our friend Viglius, and I shall be happy for you too if you go there.

You imagine that if you could share my table, you would become a demigod. I only wish my hospitality were as beneficial as you think and as I would like! As far as my own wishes are concerned, no guest would be more welcome than yourself. It has always been my nature to avoid crowds; now my age and the endless burden of my work, as well as my steadily deteriorating health, compel me to be quite unsociable. I usually invite two or three people – special friends – so that I do not face a lupine meal.[9] My

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3 A pun on *legatio* 'legation, embassy' and *relegatio* 'banishment, exile'
4 Zuichemus (Ep 2101)
5 From Dôle; cf lines 99–103 below.
6 See Ep 2183 n1.
7 From Dôle to Valence and thence to Avignon; see Ep 2168.
8 See Ep 2194 n4.
9 By 'a lupine meal' Erasmus means a meal passed in silence. The phrase is apparently not classical, but is derived from the proverb 'The wolves saw him first,' which is applied to someone suddenly struck dumb. There was an old belief that if a wolf sighted a man first, the man would lose his speech; see *Adagia* I vii 86.

mind grows weary with study, so at dinner I like to relax with talk of a more light-hearted nature.

The move here has turned out very satisfactorily, indeed quite beyond my expectations. I was afraid the climate would prove unfriendly to my constitution, since the city is almost surrounded by mountains that tower over it, thus allowing no clear prospect in any direction except to the west. In fact I have hardly ever experienced a more agreeable climate.[10] I was invited on generous terms to settle elsewhere, but at this point I did not dare to fly too far from the nest I have occupied for so many years. So I have decided to spend the winter here, if the uncertainties of war permit.[11] The city is subject to King Ferdinand, whose attitude towards me is so friendly that I believe there is nothing he would not do for my sake. Also there is a university here that is not undistinguished, in which the most flourishing of its faculties is that of law. It has Zasius, who is old in years but lively in mind;[12] I do not know of anyone else in these regions with whom he could be compared. Besides him there are others of no inconsiderable learning. There is the highest degree of harmony among the clergy, the council, the people, and the university.

Haio Cammingha from Friesland is staying with me.[13] I find his company increasingly agreeable as he becomes each day more expert in literature and more competent in philosophy. From what I observe of his character I am sure that our feelings of mutual affection will endure forever. At least for the present he is so dear and so agreeable that he could not be more so if he were my own son.

I wonder why it is that Dôle, despite being within the emperor's domain,[14] treats our countrymen so unfairly. I have been told this by many people, even though you, with your customary civility, pretend it is not so. However, dear Karel, take a good look at the question before you rush into a decision. Whatever you think will suit you best, follow that. Your company will delight me only if the pleasure you give is matched by the benefit you receive.

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10 See Ep 2151 n1.

11 The immediate danger of war in Switzerland had now passed; see Ep 2173 n10.

12 Born in 1461, Zasius was now sixty-eight.

13 See Ep 2108:13–14.

14 Ie in the Franche-Comté (or Free County of Burgundy), which was still a Hapsburg territory and would remain so until it was finally ceded to France in 1678

What is this I am hearing? That the magpies[15] are planning to revive the market in indulgences? Just think what damage has already been done to the church by that! We laughed at the rest of your stories, I mean at those that were very amusing. I have a high opinion of your powers of judgment, my good Karel, and am pleased at your loyal devotion; but if you listen to me, you will not get involved in a dispute with men like Carcinus and Planodorp[16] or with those sinister birds, for whenever they so desire, they cease to be magpies, grackles, and hoopoes, and turn into vipers, wolves, and lions. Do not make the hornets angry with you. Find your pleasure in the society of the Muses and the Graces. And if you feel like laughing at the silly fuss these people stir up, laugh by all means – but keep it to yourself. No one has been able to harm them more than they harm themselves.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 2 July 1529

2192 / To Anton Fugger

Freiburg, 7 July 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Erasmus' reply to Fugger's no longer extant reply to Ep 2145.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE MOST HONOURABLE ANTON FUGGER, GREETING

It is sometimes the way in human affairs, my excellent Anton, that where we hope for a great friendship we get great animosity, and where we expect nothing we discover our dearest friends. Evidently this is how the life of man is governed by Jupiter, who, as Homer testifies, mixes joys with sorrows and sorrows with joys from the two jars that stand on his threshold.[1] Who would have expected such a warm, devoted, and kindly friend to appear from Augsburg? That letter of yours was filled with a great spirit of devotion to me,[2] although up to now I have not done the slightest thing to deserve it. Can you imagine what pleasure that spontaneous act of kindness gave me? Believe me, I derived much greater happiness and comfort from your letter than if I had received news of a rich benefice. How true

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15 Ie the Dominicans, who in public wore a black cloak over their white robe; cf Ep 329:38n.

16 Ie Lodovicus Carinus and Heinrich Eppendorf; see Ep 2111 nn2–3.

2192

1 Homer *Iliad* 24.527–8

2 The letter, not extant, to which Ep 2145 was the answer

were those words of the wisest of kings that nothing is as precious as a sincere and faithful friend![3] And the joy in my heart was all the greater because you made such a generous and friendly offer and I had not made use of it (though this put me no less in your debt and I acknowledged my indebtedness gladly).[4] But it pleased me that nothing was drawn from a friend's resources and that while there was no question of my indebtedness, I could feel much freer about it. For whoever accepts a favour must also accept some anxiety about repaying it – and nothing is more precious to noble hearts than freedom. Even so, when I considered how I could show my appreciation of your devotion to me, I felt some uneasiness.

I have learned in addition – and not just from our friend Nachtgall[5] – that you are a most generous patron of letters and of men of letters. You would not be so generous if you were not an excellent person with a mind that is superior to your wealth – and great indeed is the wealth that Fortune has heaped upon you, a Fortune that is by no means blind. (On second thought, you may owe your wealth less to Fortune than to your own energy and judgment.) The elder Vespasian was praised because he made excellent use of his ill-gotten gains.[6] How much more worthy of praise are you, dear Anton, for using so well what the favour of Fortune has thrust upon you or your own industry has acquired. It is further evidence of your uncommon wisdom that your greatest concern is that your children – if you are blessed with children or if you adopt a family – should be trained from a tender age in piety and in the noblest branches of learning. How different is this from the attitude of certain people who believe they owe nothing to piety provided they have made their children wealthy. It is evident that you recognize another more splendid kind of wealth, over which, when planted in the mind, Fortune has no jurisdiction. You do not regard your children as truly rich unless they are endowed with possessions of this kind.

When these thoughts were urging me, if not to repay your kindness, at least to witness how deeply I understood and loved that high and noble

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3 Ecclus 6:15. Erasmus here confuses the authors of two books of the Bible: Solomon, 'the wisest of kings,' putative author of the Wisdom of Solomon, and Jesus son of Sirach, author of the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach, commonly referred to as Ecclesiasticus.

4 On Fugger's offer, see Ep 2145:1–4.

5 Ep 2166 n3

6 The father of the emperor Vespasian was a tax gatherer. Upon retiring from this dishonourable profession he became a successful banker; Suetonius *Divus Vespasianus* 1–2.

heart of yours, what if a second letter did not arrive from you,[7] even more friendly and affectionate than the first. I thought I would be fortunate if you accepted my excuses with a good grace, for I had written in a somewhat gloomy mood and in the middle of packing.[8] But you were kind enough not just to accept my decision to reject rather than welcome your generous and spontaneous offer, but in a most affectionate letter you went out of your way to pledge your undying friendship; and with that singular modesty of yours, you even ask for something that I should have begged for and included in every prayer. Indeed I was already beginning to count among my special blessings the fact that such an excellent patron, and (if you prefer) friend, had been added to my list of intimates.

These many blessings were more than I could have dreamed of, but they were not sufficient, illustrious Fugger, to satisfy your generous spirit. You added as a pledge or, as you call it, a token of your undying love for me a gift that is as elegant as it is valuable[9] – and it is not speechless, for in a couplet it testifies to the affection of the donor. From such a cherished cup even water would taste like honeyed wine. It is true that for several years now I have drunk wine more from necessity than pleasure, using it more as a medicine than a drink. When I enjoyed horse-riding, which was my way of dispelling the fatigue that crept over my body, my friends used to give me a horse as a gift.[10] But three years ago I ceased to ride,[11] not changing from horse to ass, as the proverb has it,[12] but reduced to going on foot. It is two years now since I ceased to get any pleasure from wine, which I drink not just very sparingly, but diluted with water boiled with liquorice root.[13] If it was handed to someone unused to it, he would say it was not wine but some kind of medicinal potion. But if I shall not drink real wine from your cup, at least I shall have the pleasure of drinking from it a draft of your affection.

On top of all these kindnesses to me you add another: that in future I should enjoy the privileges of friendship and call without hesitation upon your services whenever the need arises. I gladly accept your offer, which comes from the heart, but cannot think of anything I can promise in return.

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7 Not extant
8 Ep 2145
9 A gold cup with cover; see Major 41, Sieber 6.
10 Cf Ep 1488:55–64.
11 See Ep 1422:25–6, which was written five years earlier.
12 *Adagia* I vii 29, a proverb implying loss of status
13 Cf Epp 1603:117–18, 1769:38–40.

If I competed with you in the exchange of gifts, I would look more arrogant than Marsyas, who entered a singing contest with Apollo.[14] I do not see how any little effort of mine could be of assistance to you. But if you suggest something or if an opportunity arises, I shall show you that the last thing you will find wanting in Erasmus is a willing mind and a grateful heart.

Now it remains to reply briefly to the rest of your letter. When I wrote that various princes had invited me on the most generous terms to settle in one place or another, I certainly did not intend to compare you with them in rank or generosity. I wanted to convince you that my health was such that I could not risk a long journey either to please anyone or to take advantage of the generous terms offered. I would have placed a dear friend above all the treasures of kings – though so far my experience of the emperor and of Ferdinand is that they are as warm towards me as they are high in station; nor would there have been any lack of generosity on their part. But I have always shunned the life of a courtier, and now through age and infirmity I am unsuited to it. The lack of money does not trouble me, for I am content with little, and so I make no great demands on their good will. My imperial pension is in arrears now for more than seven years;[15] it is promised, but not delivered. And such is the condition of the court that its officials think themselves lucky if, when they receive no salary, they are not required to make a personal loan.[16] The emperor wrote once or twice from Spain, giving orders to pay Erasmus his pension as an extraordinary payment.[17] Margaret replied in accordance with a decree of the council that if I returned to Brabant, I could have all the gold in the mountains of Persia, not just my little pension.[18] So large is the crowd of claimants, so outrageous their behaviour, that I prefer to forego whatever emoluments are involved rather than betray my nature and act like an importunate beggar. The pension is three hundred pounds in French money each year.[19] To put the situation in a nutshell, it seems to be the destiny

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14 Marsyas, a satyr who, having challenged Apollo to a musical contest and lost, was flayed alive for his presumption

15 Erasmus' pension as councillor to Charles V (Ep 370:18n) had not been paid since his departure from Louvain in October 1521 and his settlement in Basel. See Ep 1380 introduction.

16 Cf Ep 2109:10–17.

17 Epp 1380, 1643:15–17

18 See Ep 1380 introduction.

19 An annual pension of £300 tournois = 150 *écus à la couronne au soleil* (at 40s each) = £35 sterling (at 56d per *écu*), equivalent in value to 1,400 days' wages for a Cambridge master mason

of the imperial court to be always in need. You might call it 'the jar of the Danaids.'[20]

What you offer is not 'a small thing,' as you modestly put it in your letter, but royal bounty, although if you offered nothing, your friendliness could lure me to your city. I was very much afraid that leaving the nest to which I had grown accustomed over so many years would turn out badly. But this short move has turned out much better than I expected, for it has thrown off the mustiness produced by long inertia, and I find the climate here as agreeable to my constitution as almost any I have encountered elsewhere. The city authorities were sympathetic even before King Ferdinand wrote and commended me to them.[21] The only difficulty is that all prices here are high. This will be no great problem for me – a man with money and a philosopher too! So there is a good chance that this city will always be, as its name implies, my Eleutheropolis.[22] My preference, however, would be to live in a more populated city.

You inform me that the cause of religion in your city is in far better shape than certain people had reported here; I am happy to hear this not only for the city's sake but, on the personal level, for your sake too. In the present stormy situation the best we can hope for, in my opinion, is a state of equilibrium, so that we neither slip into Judaism and tyranny as some have done,[23] nor sink back into anarchy and paganism, until some deity appears *ex machina* to restore peace to our troubled world, for he alone can bring a happy ending to the present tragedy.

I wrote recently, but only a word or two.[24] You ask me to write often. If you can read letters like this, I shall give you no cause to complain that I have neglected my duty – at least in this particular. May the Lord Jesus keep you safe and all who are dear to you, my good and special friend. I do not measure our friendship in months or years. I reckon the immensity of your affection from your promise that in good will and devotion you will not take second place to any of my old friends or to any prince. I happily welcome

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20 The Danaids, who murdered their husbands on their wedding night, were punished in the underworld by having to carry water to fill a leaky jar.

21 See Epp 2090 introduction, 2145:33–4.

22 Erasmus uses the Greek name, Ἐλευθερόπολις, meaning 'free city,' an attempt to translate into Greek the German Freiburg.

23 'Judaism' used in this way is Erasmus' code word for religious legalism, ie outward observance of ritual and custom without real inner piety, which he thought was the basic problem of the Christianity of his day. For the larger question of Erasmus' attitude towards Jews, see CWE 63 xlix–lvi.

24 Not extant

this promise of yours as an augury of things to come, dearest Anton, and by this document I vow and bind myself to reciprocate your sentiments.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 7 July 1529

2193 / To Erasmus Schets

Freiburg, 13 July 1529

This letter, first printed by Allen, is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2167. It was sent in duplicate, and both manuscripts survive in the British Library (MS Add 38512 fols 36, 38). One is autograph but addressed by a secretary, the other in the secretary's hand but signed by Erasmus.

Greetings. I replied some time ago to that disapproving letter of yours,[1] in which you scold me for not rushing back to that blessed country where I have scarcely two friends and where, if I needed money, there is no one I could ask. I sent my letter with a schoolmaster from Bruges, but it appears that the scoundrel cheated me.[2] Lompart brought me a second letter along with letters from Ghent and two from Spain,[3] for which I thank you, my dearest Erasmus, as I do for all your other services.

I was planning to leave Basel at the beginning of Lent, but the onset of a cold delayed me.[4] Moreover, when an armed mob with artillery was occupying the town square and venting their rage on the images,[5] it was no time to move anywhere. I left after Easter around 13 April,[6] having sent on my boxes in broad daylight so that it could not be said that I was taking flight. I had received an invitation by letter from king Ferdinand,[7] who was then staying at Speyer. He also sent me a document allowing me to travel, free of tax, through the whole of his realm and the emperor's. Even the

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2193

1 Ep 2115; Erasmus replied with Ep 2159.

2 Given that the autograph survives in the British Library's collection of letters from Erasmus to Schets, there can be no doubt that Ep 2159 eventually reached Schets. Since, however, Schets makes no mention of the letter in Ep 2167, one must assume that on 27 May it had not yet reached Antwerp. It seems likely that the no longer extant letter that Schets wrote to Erasmus in July (see Allen Ep 2243:1) was his reply to Ep 2159.

3 See Ep 2167:24–9. Jakob Lompart, a Basel banker, was a reliable intermediary between Schets and Erasmus; see also Epp 1658, 1671, 1676.

4 See Ep 2125 n3. In 1529 the dates of Lent were 10 February–27 March.

5 See Ep 2097 n1.

6 Easter was 28 March.

7 See Epp 2090 introduction, 2145:30–4.

Lutherans were upset at my departure, but they had no handle with which to hold me back.

I changed my residence with much trepidation, but without incident. The authorities at Freiburg on the recommendation of King Ferdinand gave me a house, obviously intended for a king, having been built for Maximilian.[8] I find the climate as friendly as any I have experienced. I have not felt better for many years.[9]

Anton Fugger sent me a letter with a hundred gold florins as money for the journey, and promising the same amount yearly on the understanding that I go to Augsburg.[10] I thanked him and went to Freiburg im Breisgau, because it is close and is part of Ferdinand's domain, and I have never felt better pleased with any decision. In spite of my refusal, Fugger gave me a golden cup as a present, a very elegant thing.[11] I am happily situated here, provided war does not break out.[12] Between those cold-hearted friends and hot-headed critics in your country I do not know what I could hope for. Report this to those friends who are ruining their eyes with weeping.

Perhaps I shall send my personal servant around 1 September, since I do not see any satisfactory action being taken about my pensions. Till then, my best wishes to you and to all who are very dear to you.

The news about the ladies' conference has reached us here too.[13] I think it's an idle dream. They say that the emperor is at Genoa and that he gives no appearance of wanting peace.[14]

Freiburg im Breisgau, 13 July 1529

Erasmus of Rotterdam in his own hand

To the most honourable Erasmus Schets, merchant. In Antwerp

2194 / From Bonifacius Amerbach Basel, 13 July 1529

This letter (= AK Ep 1363) was first published by Allen, using the autograph rough draft in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS C VIa 73 61). It is Boniface's somewhat tardy reply to Ep 2183.

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8 See Ep 2112 n4.
9 See Ep 2151 n1.
10 Cf Ep 2145:1–4.
11 Ep 2192 n9
12 The danger posed by the First Kappel War in Switzerland had in fact now passed with the signing of a peace on 25 June; see Ep 2173 n10.
13 Ep 2167 n6
14 The emperor was in fact still in Barcelona, whence he set sail on 28 July and landed in Genoa on 12 August.

Greetings. It is almost a month now, illustrious Erasmus, since I hoped to set out on my visit to you. But because of delay in the council, I cannot say for sure when I shall leave.[1] It is for this reason that I have given your money to Hieronymus Froben, who is setting out in your direction; I thought you would appreciate it if the money were delivered quickly and was not delayed too long in my hands.[2] Please don't imagine, dear Erasmus, that if ever you needed some small favour, I would refuse you anything; and certainly I would never regard it as a burden to perform simple and ordinary little tasks like sending on money to you. There is nothing I do not owe to you, nothing I would not do for you willingly and promptly. If this haste of mine seems slow to you, I beg you to treat it with your usual kindly indulgence. Farewell, excellent Erasmus. Give my greetings to Glareanus.[3]

Basel, 13 July 1529

Our friend Alciati has written sending you his best wishes. Now he has begun teaching at Bourges, hired at an annual salary of six hundred crowns.[4]

2195 / To Johann Koler

Freiburg, 14 July 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is Erasmus' reply to a letter (line 3) that is no longer extant.

Johann Koler (d 1538), a native of Bavaria and a canon of St Moritz in Augsburg, had already acquired a doctorate in canon law when, in 1512, he was appointed provost of Chur, in the Grisons. Although he does not seem to have favoured Chur with more than the occasional visit, he was made vicar-general of the bishopric in 1529 and visited Rome in that capacity. Otherwise, from at

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2194

1 Bonifacius was engaged in negotiations with the city council over the terms of his professorship at the university; see Ep 2180 n5. The visit to Freiburg would eventually take place in August; see AK Ep 1375 introduction.

2 See Epp 2183:7–14, 2199:1–4.

3 Glareanus had also migrated to Freiburg; see Ep 2098 n1.

4 Alciati (Ep 1250) had left Avignon in March to take up his royal appointment at the University of Bourges. On 7 May 1529, he conveyed his greetings to Erasmus in a letter to Bonifacius, written from Bourges; see AK Ep 1354:120. These gold coins were the French *écus à la couronne au soleil*, worth 40s or £2 tournois and about 56d sterling each, for a total sum of £1,200 tournois or about £140 sterling, the equivalent of 5,600 days' wages or about 26.67 years' money wage income for a Cambridge master mason. Cf Ep 2168:30–1; CWE 12 650 Table 3D.

least 1524 onward, he resided at Augsburg, where his friends included Anton Fugger, whose invitations to Erasmus to settle in Augsburg he warmly seconded. Although Erasmus invariably declined those invitations, he was pleased to accept and to cultivate Koler's friendship, in part because doing so was beneficial to the maintenance of his contacts with Bishop Christoph von Stadion and other people of influence in Augsburg. This is the first surviving letter in the lively correspondence with Koler that was to last until Erasmus' death.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO JOHANN KOLER, PROVOST OF CHUR, GREETING

Most honoured sir, so warm and eloquent was your praise of the mind and generous heart of Anton Fugger that if his kindness had not already commended him to me,[1] your letter would have inspired in me a great liking for the man. But since there is a remarkable consensus among all who know him that he has fully earned the love of all good men, and since he has won me over not just by writing a most cordial letter but by sending gifts of considerable value, there was nothing for your letter to add to the good will I already feel towards him. But do not think your letter was unwelcome or that it was written in vain. On the contrary, let me assure you that it was most welcome indeed and highly profitable to me, because from it I learned that I was richer than I had realized by one friend, and no ordinary friend at that. For I could not imagine anything more modest, more warmhearted, more friendly than that letter of yours, which, while leaving nothing unsaid and setting everything out in a full and dignified manner, yet breathes a spirit of deep affection, which you could not have achieved by rhetoric alone. This is convincing proof to me that everything you write springs from a true and genuine heart. Ordinary love is a garrulous thing; a great love says less than it feels.

I do not intend to reply to the two parts of your letter. In the first you give a glowing account of Anton Fugger's exceptionally generous attitude towards me, but your pen cannot paint a picture of the man grand enough to match the even grander conception I have already formed of him in my mind. In the second part you heap wonderful eulogies upon me with a most generous hand, which only convinces me that you are a man with an exceptionally warm heart and that you have an affection for me that I hardly merit. It is incumbent upon me in return to declare myself even more closely bound to you.

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2195

1 Epp 2145, 2192

You write that you have gathered from my literary works that I am by temperament a man avid for peace and liberty. In such a supposition, good sir, you are not mistaken. Liberty has always been my darling,[2] and I have loved her above all others and cherished her so devotedly that I have often surrendered all I possess to acquire the cap of freedom.[3] More than once I have been offered great prospects of position and wealth.[4] But whenever I counted the cost and reckoned that I would have to abandon all thought of honours or accept a divorce from freedom, I chose to reply by breaking off the engagement .[5]

I can readily believe the many wonderful things you say about Augsburg. Were the situation different, however, you could be suspected of prejudice, being, as they say, an internal witness. But I have long been convinced by the common estimation of Augsburg as preeminent among the noble cities of Germany – and my friend Nachtgall does not tell a different story.[6] It is scarcely credible, however, that there is no one in Augsburg who would bother me. I doubt if this could be said of the Isles of the Blessed. But I am not so thin-skinned that I cannot put up with some annoyance. When you say that you are familiar with my manner of life, my age and shattered health, which has been weakened not just by the immense labour of my studies but also by the stone,[7] and of course by old age, itself a painful and incurable disease, all you succeed in doing, my dear Koler, is to discourage me from committing my poor body to a long journey and a change of climate. It is difficult to transplant an old tree.[8] The pleasure I would have in seeing your city is no reason for going there.

Another point: I am so far from being offended by your letter that I am most grateful to you for expressing your opinion frankly and without deception. I am myself a straightforward person by nature and greatly appreciate an honest mind. So far I have had no reason to complain about the name of this city, Eleutheropolis.[9] Up to now it has been what it says it is.

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2 The Latin for 'darling' is *amasia*, a word borrowed from medieval love poetry.
3 Like the slave in Martial 2.68.4 who purchased his freedom with all that he had
4 See Epp 296:104–50, 809:146–55, 1409:5–7, 2029:98–102, 2037 n40.
5 Literally 'by sending back a message,' a technical phrase for sending a message annulling a betrothal. Throughout this section Erasmus carries on the image established by *amasia* (see n2 above).
6 See Ep 2166 n3.
7 At the end of January 1530 (Allen Ep 2260:316–18), Erasmus reported that his latest attack of the stone had commenced two years earlier; cf Ep 1989 n4.
8 *Adagia* I iv 43
9 See Ep 2192 n22.

But just as the blind are said to be intrigued by things seen by the sighted, so I, a little man, have always taken delight in great buildings and great cities, and although I rarely set foot outside my room, yet I like to reside in busy towns. This is an instinctive reaction, but it is not entirely irrational. In large cities there are fewer elements of the countryside, and good things are more readily available. Again it is easier to find good friends in a great throng of people than in a sparsely populated place. I send you my very best wishes.

Freiburg, 14 July 1529

2196 / To Willibald Pirckheimer Freiburg, 15 July 1529

This letter (= Ep 1237 in WPB) was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. The annotation of certain passages has been greatly facilitated by the recent discovery of Ep 2178A, which was unknown to Allen.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO WILLIBALD PIRCKHEIMER, GREETING

I got great pleasure from your lively and jubilant letter,[1] Willibald, for it shows that you are enjoying a holiday from gout and the stone. I hope it lasts forever. You congratulate me on having made my escape. In doing so, you are acting like a friend, but you also have reason on your side; for even supposing there were no danger in Basel, at least I can say that the authorities in Freiburg have treated me with great civility. I find the weather here so agreeable to my poor body that I can almost believe I have found my youth again.[2] Before I arrived, I was convinced that the weather here was gloomy and disagreeable, always cloudy and foggy; and true enough, we have had a prodigious amount of rain. So I amused myself by composing this quatrain:

> Please tell me what it means this rain
> That tumbles from the sky both night and day.
> Mankind refuses to bewail its sins,
> So heaven dissolves in tears our debt to pay.[3]

But such annoyances are not unique to this region. In Basel a torrential stream, which used to glide under the earth, suddenly burst forth with

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1 Not extant; probably answering Ep 2158; cf Ep 2178A:3.

2 See Ep 2151 n1.

3 A prose translation by Clarence Miller of this epigram and the one that follows will be found in CWE 85 163 (nos 81–2). Useful commentary on them by Harry Vredeveld is found in CWE 86 552–3.

calamitous results; the damage, we are told, cannot be repaired for one hundred thousand ducats.[4] However, in spite of the weather I am in fairly good health. I am glad I left Basel, although I left most reluctantly.

Fifteen years ago I began my association with the city, visiting it often on my trips from Brabant. Then for almost eight years straight I enjoyed its fine and pleasant hospitality. There Johann Froben became my friend; I could not even have hoped to receive from heaven a truer friend. And the attitude of his family towards me was in no way different. As a result, my feelings for his children are unchanged by Froben's death. I had virtually adopted the city as my homeland, and, if I am not mistaken, I was not a burdensome or awkward guest. When I was about to enter the boat, I expressed my feelings in a quatrain, which that splendid man Bonifacius Amerbach, who escorted me on the journey, copied into his notebook. It is very nautical,[5] if you would like to hear it:

> Basel, farewell. No other city made
> Me half so welcome now for many a year.
> I wish you well, and may no future guest
> More dreadful than Erasmus settle here.

I am convinced there is no one in that city who could justly complain about me.

Before Lutheranism moved into the city, I was on good terms with the clergy, the council, and the people. Shortly afterwards, when it was realized that I would never agree to become a partner in their turbulent affairs, much less be their leader, a number of mean and reckless persons began to snarl at me. In the end they attacked me in letters, cartoons, and pamphlets.[6] I put up with this readily enough; their desperate efforts to drive me into their faction, even against my will, succeeded only in stiffening my resistance. The behaviour that I witnessed there would have made me reluctant to enter into an alliance with such people even if their teaching had been less repugnant.

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4 See Ep 2180 n3.

5 The meaning of 'nautical' is not entirely clear. The most likely meaning is 'typical of a sailor's song [of farewell].' Erasmus' little poem fits the pattern of classical poems about leaving or arriving by water exemplified by Homer *Odyssey* 13.38–46.

6 On the cartoons, see Ep 1477B:31–7; on the pamphlets, Epp 1477A, 1477B, 1496, 1510.

I realized that things were gradually moving towards a climax; I could scarcely endure the animosity of princes and critics who kept saying that I would not have stayed for so many years in that city if I did not secretly approve of what was happening there, and this charge embarrassed me in front of my friends. I was on the point of leaving several times but was delayed by business that could not be completed without my presence and by other kinds of obligation. But what held me back more than anything else was the possibility of serious trouble if I left the nest to which I had grown accustomed over so many years at great risk to my health; for life is the one thing which, if lost, cannot be recovered. But when all the churches publicly submitted to a faction to which I never wished to adhere, when the altars were removed and violent hands were laid on statues and pictures,[7] and when, on top of all this, further innovations were constantly being introduced and the situation appeared to be moving towards revolution, I decided to move, whatever the perils of the journey. My thoughts were turned even more in this direction by the good will expressed by king Ferdinand,[8] who at that time was presiding over the Diet of Speyer. There were also certain ominous rumblings that were not without effect on my decision: first that fool Thraso threatening legal action,[9] and then another viperous creature planning something similar,[10] and although they had no case against me, I saw that my friends were worried that even an excellent case would fail before the sort of judges I would face, for whom any excuse would be enough.

When the decision was made to leave Basel, we debated whether to slip away secretly or depart openly. The first course was safer, the other more honourable. We chose the honourable in preference to the safe. I had already sent on two carts piled up with boxes of books and household goods, for that could not be done in secret. On the following day I learned that all the preachers were incensed with me on two grounds: first, it was alleged that when I was on my way to Froben's garden, on catching sight of them I had turned to the right, covering my face with my cloak in a gesture that signified my abhorrence. In fact I covered my face on account of annoying winds, which, if allowed to blow on my face, sometimes cause an excruciating toothache; and I turned to the right out of habit because the other path is narrow and made disgusting by the stench of

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7 See Ep 2097 n1.
8 See Ep 2090 introduction.
9 Eppendorf; see Ep 2086.
10 Carinus; see Ep 2111 n2.

excrement.[11] My other offence concerned my colloquy entitled 'The Cyclops,' in which I mentioned a man with a very long nose who had a sheep on his head and a wolf in his heart. That joke was directed against one of my amanuenses, who had a very long nose and wore a woollen cap, but they thought I had Oecolampadius in mind (in fact I had never heard that Oecolampadius wore such a cap).[12]

Fearing that these incidents could stir up trouble for me, especially since the situation had become so inflamed, I wrote a few words of apology to Oecolampadius and invited him to meet me if he wished to discuss the matter further.[13] He came without hesitation and I satisfied him easily. He said he had not been upset. I denied that I had ever harboured feelings of hostility towards him, though I disagreed with him on certain matters of dogma. He ended by trying to discourage me from leaving. He launched into a multitude of arguments with this in mind, but I interrupted: 'Your eloquent attempt to persuade me,' I said, 'is pointless, for I have already made the move, having sent on all my belongings as well as my money.' He then begged me not to leave with a fixed intention never to return. I replied that the nest to which I was flying was close by; if it turned out well, I would see where God was calling me.

Next day the tribune[14] accosted Beatus Rhenanus.[15] He asked him if the rumour was true that I was leaving. He replied that it was indeed true. He asked if I was leaving because I was offended by something. 'I do not think so,' he said, 'but he can no longer put up with the ill will of princes and theologians.' The tribune asked many other questions, all pointing to the same conclusion – that I should not leave.

We hired a boat, which was to carry me and several others to Neuenburg, a town only too beloved by the river Rhine.[16] The rest made the journey overland on horseback to meet us at Neuenburg.

Since I was neither a citizen nor beholden to anyone either publicly or privately, I did not have to deal with anyone; also I had a letter from the king inviting me to join him if I could do so conveniently, as well as an official document allowing me to travel free of duties through all the territories

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11 Cf Ep 2147:26–32.
12 The joke was directed against Nicolaas Kan; see Ep 2147:15–21.
13 Ep 2147:33–5
14 Jakob Meyer; see Ep 2158 n9.
15 Ep 2105 n8
16 Neuenburg am Rhein, half way between Basel and Freiburg, had a tendency from time to time to be Neuenburg *im* Rhein.

Erasmus in his travelling clothes
Silverpoint by Hans Holbein the Elder, 1516–21
Courtesy Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel

of the emperor and Ferdinand.[17] Certain people, however, caused no end of delays, making one excuse after another, although no discussions were held with me. My friends and the boatman thought it best not to weigh anchor at the bridge, which is the most crowded place in the city, but to leave from St Anthony's,[18] which is in fact the public harbour for the city. The boatman was called back two or three times to the council, and the argument went on for more than two hours. The boatman maintained that it had always been possible to leave from any public harbour in the city. He was told that it was not permissible now. Since this was a matter of no concern to anyone, the person who issued the prohibition must surely have had a grudge against me.

What was I to do? I obeyed the council and left from the bridge, offering myself as a spectacle to the people for some considerable time. No other unpleasantness occurred. Everything else turned out very well. It has been many years since I regretted any decision less than leaving Basel. I left to the great sorrow not only of my friends but also of the more sensible among those who support the new ideas. I preferred leaving like this rather than with crowds cheering my departure.

So far nothing has happened here to disappoint me. So I used the elegant bowl you gave me and drank a libation to Christ the Saviour, not the third libation as the proverb has it, but the first, the second, and the last,[19] since he is the same yesterday, and today, and forever.[20] I want to tell you how pleased I was by the gift, especially since it came from a heart that could make a glass bauble as precious as a fine gem. The Terminus engraved on it will remind me that my last day is not far off.[21] And the ring you sent some time ago recalls to me every day the memory of my dear Willibald – though Willibald is too deeply fixed in my heart to need any such reminder.[22]

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17 See Epp 2090 introduction, 2158:45–7, 2161:42–3, and Allen Ep 2209:38–9.

18 St Anthony's Chapel, which stood on the left bank of the Rhine near the site of the modern Johanniterbrücke

19 Allen incorrectly identifies the proverb as *Adagia* II ix 5: *Ter* 'Thrice,' which only refers to the common practice in ritual of doing things three times. Here the specific reference is to the Greek practice of pouring three libations, the first to Zeus and the Olympians, the second to the Heroes, and the third to 'Zeus the saviour' or, as Plato has it (*Philebus* 66D), simply 'to the saviour.' Erasmus naturally changes this to 'Christ the Saviour' and merges all three libations into one.

20 Heb 13:8

21 See Ep 2178A n4.

22 Ep 1558:20–1

A few days ago, quite unexpectedly, that excellent man Anton Fugger sent me an elegant, beautifully gilded cup as a present;[23] in addition he offered me no end of courtesies and kindnesses if I agreed to move to Augsburg; and in case I should cite the expense of the journey as a pretext for refusing, he gave me an address in Basel where I could collect one hundred gold florins.[24] It is clear, my dear Willibald, that not all men are like Cousturier, Béda, Lee, and Zúñiga. My first preference was to live in a larger city where everything is available, but some people here gave me a bad report of Augsburg's weather, and at that time I felt so ill that I hardly expected that my poor body could stand up to half a day's riding. But the ride even turned out to be beneficial.

I receive frequent letters from my friends in Brabant, inviting me to go there.[25] They call heaven and earth to witness that I celebrate alien lands (for this is the sort of language they use), while treating my own country as undeserving of respect. It would of course be more natural to grow old in one's native land. But whenever I think of the meanness of the court, especially in matters of money, and recall the gladiatorial combats against fiendish foes that I put up with there for many years, my exile seems less troubling. 'Where you are treated well, that is where your home is,' says the proverb.[26] I should like to enjoy the friendly climate here for at least a year, if Mars does not drive me out.[27] You know with what enthusiasm men have recently rushed to arms.[28] The opposing forces, equipped with swords and artillery, were only a short distance apart. It is said that they numbered twenty thousand men. Yet not a single fly perished; only the cherry trees suffered a devastating slaughter. It was a war without bloodshed and, as the Greeks say, 'a war without tears.'[29]

I was not particularly curious to know what happened at the Diet of Speyer, and if I did know, it would be better to act like Harpocrates.[30] I have

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23 Ep 2192 n9
24 See Ep 2159 n7.
25 See Epp 2115, 2159:1–5.
26 *Adagia* II ii 93; cf Ep 2159:24–5.
27 Cf Epp 2168:33–4, 2193:28–9, 2199:2–3.
28 In the First Kappel War, which on 25 June had come to a conclusion without any combat having taken place; see Ep 2173 n10.
29 *Adagia* II vi 23
30 Harpocrates was the Egyptian god of silence. He usually appears with his finger in his mouth. Erasmus' professed lack of curiosity about what happened at the diet may be an expression of his discomfort with its harsh condemnation of the Evangelicals and the reassertion of the death penalty for 'rebaptizers' (ie Anabaptists) found in Roman law. See Ep 2107 n1.

had only one conversation here with Johannes Fabri, though I got some impressions from his address.[31] I hope everything turns out well and that all my predictions prove false! As for the possibility of a reconciliation between the kings, whose antagonism has been wreaking havoc for many years on the two most flourishing parts of Christendom, Italy and Germany, the letters from my friends offer no real hope. On the contrary they show that far from appearing to put aside their quarrels, new resentments are added every day to their old grievances. Yet there is no better proof of sublimity of mind than to overlook some insults, forgive others, and if the guilty party does not deserve to be forgiven, at least to pardon the country. What would become of us if God, who is king in the fullest meaning of the term, could not put aside his anger when once offended? For so many years now practically no part of Europe has been free of turmoil, yet so far I see nothing but the signs of war. Perhaps these upheavals are not entirely unprofitable for Spanish soldiers. But what can one do? This is the nature of human affairs: they roll up and down, back and forth like the Euripus.[32]

By sending him the *Digest* you made Zasius very happy.[33] He could not have been happier or more jubilant if he had come into a kingdom. I do not begrudge him the gift, but I fear that as a result of his good fortune I may find him much more formidable to deal with. He had sent me your letter when I was at dinner,[34] indicating that there was need for haste.[35] I took out the appropriate document in German and sent it to him,[36] asking him in a brief letter to take care of the matter as he thought fit and at my

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31 Fabri (Ep 2097) paid a visit to Freiburg in May. On the 23rd he addressed the city council and the senate of the university on the subject of installing the Basel chapter at the minster. See Heinrich Schreiber *Geschichte der Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg* II. Theil: *Von der Kirchenreformation bis zur Aufhebung der Jesuiten* (Freiburg 1868) 26–7.

32 The Euripus, the channel between Boeotia and Euboea, was proverbial for its tides; see *Adagia* I ix 62.

33 See Ep 2178A:4–5.

34 Ie the letter to Erasmus accompanying the silver-gilt bowl, both of which had been delivered to Zasius along with Pirckheimer's letter to Zasius and his copy of the *Digest*; see Ep 2178A:3–8 and line 194 below.

35 Quite likely in some transaction involving Friedrich Hess, the traveling salesman who had delivered the *Digest* and the silver-gilt bowl and was on his way to the fair at Strasbourg; see Ep 2178A:7–8.

36 It is not clear just what the 'document in German' (*syngrapha Germanica*) was, since *syngrapha* can refer to various kinds of documents used in financial transactions; cf Ep 2109 n9. This one may have been a bill of exchange, on which see Ep 1934 n85.

expense. Two days later he sent the bowl; I gave the servant two farthings and in my letter of thanks I enclosed a measly crown to cover expenses.[37] To be frank, I expected a litigious reply, but not one as fierce as I received. He returned the gold coin in a letter, in which he seemed ready to take me to court, if it were not for the fact that a client owes some respect to his patron – you know the man's immoderate modesty. He said that no more serious or unpleasant incident had happened to him for a whole year and called my generosity outrageous. His companions, he said, were surprised at such stunning generosity; he himself was not just stunned, but terrified by such excess. He said that there could be no true friendship where the coinage of the marketplace leaves no room for a gratuitous act of kindness. Zasius had done me many great services over the years, which I had made not even the slightest effort to repay; nor was I the only recipient of his disinterested generosity, for he helped others too who were commended to him by the fact, I suppose, that they were known to me. Yet in spite of all this he makes light of his services and disparages them, regarding them as not worth a cent. Finally, he swore by the gods and on the life of the prince that he would not take a farthing from me. He pleaded his case with such wonderful eloquence and force that I did not dare defend myself against so eloquent and experienced a jurist. I abandoned the suit and settled my quarrel with my adversary.

Joking apart, dear Willibald, I have seen nothing in Germany so far that I have admired so much as this man's character. He is not just generous to his friends, he is generosity itself. He is growing old in body, but his mind remains to this day unbelievably vigorous. There is no loss of judgment or of memory. His unrehearsed speech is filled with splendid words and fine phrases, and it is not without charm. I have not noticed its equal even in an Italian. Add to this his genuinely Christian character. No one leaves from a conversation with him without feeling a renewed ardour for the pious life. Some people who are mere ciphers and seem made to consume the fruits of the earth live longer than the aged crows. This man fully deserves

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37 The word here translated as 'farthings' is *asses*, singular *as*. Sixteenth-century equivalents for this small Roman bronze coin would have been the English farthing (a quarter-penny) or the Flemish *mijt* (mite), of which 24 were worth 1d groot. See CWE 1 313–14, 316, 347 Appendix E. The 'measly crown' (*coronatulum*) was presumably the French gold *écu à la couronne au soleil*, worth 40s or £2 tournois and about 56d sterling. That value, was, however, equivalent to one and a half week's wages (9 days) for a master mason or carpenter at Cambridge in 1529. For the coinage values, see Ep 2126 n36.

to be immortal. The reason I cannot often enjoy his company is that he is somewhat deaf and I have a weak voice. There is nothing in human affairs into which Nemesis does not mix some touch of unpleasantness. May the Lord long preserve you for our sakes, dear Willibald, my honourable friend.

Freiburg, 15 July 1529

2197 / From Levinus Ammonius St Maartensbos, 15 July 1529

This letter was first published as Ep 75 in Enthoven. There are two surviving autograph manuscripts. The one in the Bibliothèque municipale at Besançon (MS 599 page 244) is the original draft; the one in the Rehdiger Collection at Wrocław (MS Rehd 254.9) is the fair copy that was sent to Erasmus after the original text had been polished and enlarged. Allen gave priority to the final version. Erasmus' reply is not extant, but it was probably dated 8 September 1529 (see Allen Ep 2258:2).

LEVINUS AMMONIUS TO DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM, TRUE AND GENUINE THEOLOGIAN, CORDIAL GREETINGS

Some time ago, excellent Erasmus, I sent you a letter; it was, I fear, far too long-winded,[1] especially for someone weighed down, as you are, by such heavy labours and beset by the insane rioting and sedition of the Evangelicals (for that is the flattering name they give themselves) – although it was only shortly after I sent you the letter that the news arrived that trouble had broken out.[2] At the very first rumour of these upheavals I was so upset that I almost fainted out of fear that you might suffer some serious calamity. Later, when I came to myself and recovered my accustomed faith in Christ, I prayed to our heavenly Father that he would not let you fall into the hands of the agitators. If only, even now, that welcome message would arrive, assuring me that you are safely out of range and have escaped to a place that the evil designs of desperate men cannot reach. I cannot help worrying about you, for I am convinced that the study and advancement of all good learning and of genuine theology rests with you alone and shares in your peril.

I was prompted to write such a lengthy letter partly by my great love for you – for I imagined myself talking to you face to face – and partly by the assurance given me (how accurately I do not know) by our friend Karel

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2197

1 The letter was Ep 2082; see its lines 407–9.

2 See Ep 2097 n1.

Uutenhove,[3] who virtually swore by all that is sacred that you would welcome letters from me, even frequent letters. I was convinced of his sincerity not because I felt sure that letters of mine would delight you, but because he asked me to mention him whenever I wrote, and I could not persuade myself that he would have asked this had he not felt you would be sufficiently appreciative of my attentions as not to regard my aims and my efforts as utterly despicable, even if you were less impressed by my learning.

I carefully placed my letter in an envelope along with the other things that I wanted to send at the same time, tied it with cord, stamped it with two seals, as you instructed me,[4] and sent it, with no thought of its being intercepted, to Erasmus Schets to be forwarded safely to you; I am inclined to believe that Schets at any rate performed his duty conscientiously. The last thing I wanted was that my letter should somehow go astray. In fact I was so concerned that no hint of these things should reach anyone but you that even my friends and servants still do not know that I wrote to you, much less what I have written.

But after the letter had gone, I began to have some regrets that I had excused you from sending a reply, although I had acted in all sincerity, not wanting to burden a busy man like you by adding to the tedium of reading my stuff the tedium of replying.[5] Yet I did have second thoughts, for now I have no way of knowing whether the letter was delivered. Then I thought of the vast distance that separates us, of the numerous dangers that lie along the way from the treachery of evil men, and of the many troublemakers who, given any excuse, are ready to create mischief. There were many possibilities for causing trouble, seeing that I had kept absolutely nothing here with which to refute slander (should anyone contemplate such a thing) except a draft copy. On the other hand I cannot really doubt that my letter was put in your hands, for of course I trusted the promise you made in your letter that anything I sent with this courier would reach you safely, and I had confidence also in the good faith of Schets himself. Still, whatever the situation, a reply from you, however, brief, would have removed much of my uncertainty. You see what anxious worries have taken hold of my mind?

That was a very flattering reference to me, excellent Erasmus, in your letter to our friend Karel that forms the preface to your exquisite volume

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3 Cf Ep 2082:444–50.
4 In Ep 2062:19–21
5 Presumably a reference to the observation later in Ep 2082 (lines 407–9) that Erasmus had better things to do than read his letters

of Chrysostom in Greek.[6] I interpret this as your way of drawing my attention to the sort of person you would like Ammonius to be. I wish I were truly like that, if only because you have said I am! I thank you most sincerely, partly for such strong evidence of your good will and partly for that truly golden book, which, though you dedicated it specifically to our friend Uutenhove, is available to us all. Would you like to know what you have accomplished in this book? Well, you have whetted our appetite! I only wish we could eat all we want from such a rich table!

From the list of names in your letter one has now been removed by death, Antonius Clava,[7] who departed this mortal life on 31 May of this year, 1529. On his death, as a souvenir of himself, he left me in his will three Greek books:[8] the Bible (as it is called),[9] your Herodotus,[10] and the *Moralia* of Plutarch.[11] I pray that Christ may give him his just reward. I have every hope that he is now with Christ in eternal bliss. I beg you, Erasmus, to remember our dear Clava whenever a suitable opportunity arises.[12] I know that he will live for ever in the *Farrago* of your letters.[13] But contrary to the old proverb, I should like his memory to be celebrated even now when he is dead.[14] And our friend Ceratinus, all too prematurely, has gone where we all must go.[15]

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6 Ep 2093:79–80
7 Ep 175:13n
8 Allen cites manuscript letters in the Bibliothèque municipale at Besançon (MS 599 pages 231–2, 255–6) indicating that Ammonius had difficulty getting the books from Clava's executor.
9 The Aldine edition of the entire Bible in Greek only; see Ep 770.
10 A copy of the Aldine edition of 1502 that Erasmus had given to Clava as a present; see Ep 851:3n. Levinus had borrowed it from Clava in October 1527 and returned it to him in April 1528, but not before asking that it be bequeathed to him. Allen cites manuscript letters in the Bibliothèque municipale at Besançon (MS 599 pages 156, 170–2). The book is now in the Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Columbia University.
11 Doubtless the Aldine edition of the Greek text, March 1509
12 For Erasmus' compliance with this wish, see Allen Ep 2260:39–47.
13 The letter to Clava in the *Farrago* of 1519 is Ep 841, while Epp 524 and 530 had appeared in the *Epistolae elegantes* of 1517, which were dedicated to Clava (Ep 543:31n). So Ammonius may actually have been thinking of the *Epistolae ad diversos* of 1521 (Ep 1206), which included the letters from all the previously published collections.
14 Allen does not identify the proverb, and we have not found it. It was presumably a variation on the theme 'dead and forgotten.' Cf Ps 31:12.
15 Jacobus Ceratinus (Ep 623:34n) was in fact still alive and would remain so until 1530.

But enough unhappy news. I was greatly taken by your clever jokes – which I think you introduce as a sort of delightful relaxation; I particularly liked the jokes you made about our Anticomarite.[16] We laughed till we were exhausted. But surely you don't imagine that a character like that, even after being admonished so wittily, is blushing with embarrassment? By the Muses, dear Erasmus, I do not think this likely: he is so thick-skinned. I wish we could meet sometime and talk about him at greater length.

I hear that you got away safely from Basel with all your belongings and are now in Freiburg. This is the story that I hear constantly. My own opinion, however, is that you are just scouting around to find some safe retreat for your old age where you can perform the last act of your earthly life – though we hope that, happily, that day will be long postponed. Perhaps you have set your mind on Italy or at all events on France. I propose, my good Erasmus, that you bid goodbye to all these other peoples and places and betake yourself as soon as you safely can to Ghent. You will find that a great change in attitude has taken place here in a few years. The whole council of Flanders is devoted to you, and you are always in their thoughts. A good number of the monks have come to their senses and turned from their superstitions to true piety. Any lovers of the old ways who still survive keep quiet out of fear. I would venture to assert that there is no city in Christendom in which the gospel is preached more sincerely or which has more genuine friends of Erasmus. You know what our people are like – they do not know the meaning of pretence.

What can I say to you now, Erasmus, about my incomparable friend Omaar van Edingen?[17] Even by himself he would be enough to satisfy your heart's desire, a man more gracious than the Graces themselves, who is so popular with all the citizens that no one whom he judges worthy of his friendship could fail to love him. He is not just promising but offering you all of himself and everything he possesses to use as you wish. If you want a house in the city, he will see to it that you are not just well and honourably housed, but in splendid style. If you prefer the country, he offers you the whole of a truly magnificent house that is at his disposal, where you could live like a philosopher in perfect peace far from all disturbances. The place is pleasantly situated in a hollow, about a mile distant from the surrounding hills. It has a healthy climate, bubbling fountains and green lawns, and there is beauty everywhere as far as the eye can see; it is some distance from

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16 A nickname for Pierre Cousturier, who, strictly speaking, was an anti-Anticomarite; see Ep 2016:58–62 with n14.

17 Ep 2060

other residences, an ideal place for the practice of philosophy. The house itself is built on a grassy mound somewhat raised above the general level, and surrounded by water like an island. It can be approached only by a bridge, and that can be removed. If you look east, you will be facing Jérôme Ruffault, abbot of St Adriaan's in Geraardsbergen (for so the town is called), a man greatly devoted to you.[18] Behind you will be Master Frans van Massemen, a most noble knight and distinguished baron, a special supporter of mine and of all scholars.[19] Slightly further back you will have me too. Finally our friend Edingen will do everything in his power to honour you and make you comfortable. And all of this is within a mile. As for the sort of friend I am, I prefer that you find this out for yourself in person. This country residence would be enough to satisfy the luxurious tastes even of a prince. It lies within the territory of Hasselt, not the Hasselt from which that lazy Minorite Frans Titelmans of Louvain came, but a quite different place.[20] For it does not produce the sort of people who use their leisure badly.

I must end, in case once again I overstep the limits of a letter, but first let me repeat this appeal, that you go nowhere but to Ghent; for it was not idle praise that you heaped upon the city,[21] and it would like to show you how justified your praises were.

I wish you every blessing in Christ, my dearest Erasmus. May his grace always be with you.

From the Charterhouse at St Maartensbos, 15 July 1529

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18 The son of Erasmus' friend Jean Ruffault, the imperial treasurer (Ep 1287 n10), Jérôme Ruffault (d 1562) matriculated at Louvain in 1517 where, from 1520 to 1522, he was one of the favourite students of Juan Luis Vives. By 1523 he had been received into the Benedictine order and in 1526 he was, thanks to the influence of his father and the intervention of Charles V, elected abbot of St Adriaan's. As a student he had moved in the humanist circles around Vives and others. In bringing him to the attention of Erasmus, Vives pointed out that young Ruffault had written to his father in support of Erasmus' attempts to collect his imperial pension (Epp 1303:62–3, 1306:49–51).

19 Scarcely anything is known about Frans van Massemen other than that he was grand bailiff of Ghent and a faithful friend and patron of Ammonius. His sudden death on 22 August 1529 on his way home from a church dedication is described graphically in a letter of Ammonius written two days later; see Allen's note.

20 Titelmans (Ep 1823) was born at Hasselt in Limburg; Levinus is referring to Ophasselt in East Flanders, now part of the town of Geraardsbergen.

21 In Ep 2093:70–4, which was already in print.

Someone reported to me that *De vocatione gentium*, which has hitherto been attributed to Ambrose,[22] is assigned to a different author on the title-page of a copy in the monastery of the Seven Fountains near Brussels.[23] Although my informant had seen the book, he could not now recall the name, and I do not have the leisure to investigate. If you ask me to, I shall try to find out. Farewell again.

I had almost forgotten. Beside the annotations on Acts of the Apostles, chapter 7[:14], page 277 I wrote, 'In the matter of seventy-five souls: St Jerome provided an excellent solution to this problem in his *Quaestiones Hebraicae* etc.' This has no bearing on your note or on the question that is raised there, but it is relevant to the matter of conflicts in Scripture; for in Genesis, chapter 46[:27] and Exodus, chapter 1[:5] and similarly in Deuteronomy 10[:22] only seventy souls are mentioned, while Luke [in Acts] speaks of seventy-five.[24] When hurriedly selecting comments from the margin of my text that I had jotted down for my own use, I was evidently not sufficiently alert at this point. Will you please kindly pardon me? A third farewell!

To the excellent father in Christ, Master Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam, the truest of theologians. In Freiburg

2198 / From Alfonso de Valdés Barcelona, [c July 1529]

The manuscript of this letter, an autograph rough draft, is in the Real Academia de la Historia at Madrid (MS Est 18 gr 1.5 fol 85). It was first published in Caballero 481. It answers Ep 2126 and another letter of 6 April. Given how long it normally took for letters to travel to and from Spain, Allen argued that this reply had to be given a late date. The date cannot have been later than 28 July 1529, when Valdés sailed from Barcelona in the entourage of Charles V.

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22 See Ep 2190:12–14.

23 The Austin Priory of Zevenborren, founded in 1382 and located in the Soignes forest. We have no information about the manuscript mentioned here, but the work was soon attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine, and recent scholarship has upheld that attribution.

24 Ammonius is referring to his copy of the Annotations of 1527. In the next and final edition, that of 1535, Erasmus inserted a new note mentioning the point that Ammonius makes here: see LB VI 461E–F. Jerome's solution was to suggest that Luke, the author of Acts, writing for a Greek-speaking audience, followed the Septuagint, the version of the Old Testament known to his readers, which has 'seventy souls' in place of the 'seventy-five souls' of the Hebrew text. See Jerome *Liber quaestionum Hebraicarum in Genesim* on Gen 46:26–7.

⊗1 After arriving in Italy, the emperor spent most of September and October at Piacenza, where he received Cardinal Francisco de Quiñones (Ep 2126 n3), whom the pope had dispatched to welcome him. Valdés wrote to Erasmus informing him that the cardinal's entourage included his old enemy Diego López Zúñiga (Ep 1260 n36) as well as Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, a Spanish scholar who, as Erasmus knew, lived in Rome and was a protégé of his more recent enemy Alberto Pio (Ep 2080). In his reply, Erasmus claimed that Sepúlveda was helping Pio write a book against him (cf Allen Ep 2261:69–71). Neither Valdés' letter nor Erasmus reply is extant, but Sepúlveda, who had seen them, refers to them briefly in his *Antapologia pro Alberto Pio in Erasmum* (1532). See the Latin/Spanish edition by Joaquin J. Sánchez Gázquez, *Antiapologia en defensa de Alberto Pío . . . frente a Erasmo de Rotterdam* (Universidad de Almería c 2000) 100.

Cordial greetings. I recently received two letters from you: one sent on 2 March (you write that a copy of this was dispatched with a second courier) and the other on 6 April.[1] You could scarcely believe the pleasure with which your letters flooded my mind. On the Carvajal matter, I am surprised the French are foolish enough to consider such a silly book worth publishing.[2] In our country, even though the author himself lives here, the book was buried within three or four days and no one can obtain a copy. I suspect the Franciscans themselves suppressed the book in order to deny your friends an excuse for replying. Two, however, had completed a reply and both gave their work for me to read. One was quite learned but too acrimonious, the other was both acrimonious and ignorant. I persuaded them not to publish, for I realize that nothing is less helpful to your cause than to make these hornets angrier still, especially since they themselves have suppressed the book to avoid a reply.

Your suspicions about the author are quite unfounded;[3] for although this little friar has travelled through many regions, he is Spanish by birth and was born and educated in Spain, and he still lives here in Salamanca. He was for a time in Paris. Also you seem to credit him with some degree of learning, when in fact all he knows is how to stitch together scraps collected from your writings. Wherever you leave him on his own and he wants to

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2198

1 On the first letter see Ep 2126 introduction. The second is not extant.

2 See Ep 2110 n10.

3 See Ep 2126:60–2, 103–8.

produce something from his own workshop, he falls at once into barbarism and solecism, making it easy to spot the jewels in the dung. I suspect that Lee played no small part in this story,[4] for at that time he was living in Valladolid with time on his hands; he is still there, a long distance from the court. Not even the name of Aleandro has been mentioned here.[5] The anonymous letter that you say inspired Carvajal to write against you was produced by a bishop, who is as devoted to you as he is a good friend of mine.[6] It was published during the year before Carvajal's book came out. Do not believe that it was this that provoked the friar into attacking you. But when Carvajal arrived fresh from Paris and wanted to make a reputation among us and become famous in the world, what better strategy did he have than to pen an attack on Erasmus? And do not be upset that he hoped to incite the emperor against you with his 'new monarchy' and his 'unfair terms,'[7] for everywhere here he and his malice have been dismissed with contempt.

I am glad you received the letter from the archbishop of Toledo along with his note for two hundred ducats.[8] You will do well to dedicate the edition to him alone,[9] for his good will towards you deserves some recognition. Also I would have no objection to your sending the volumes you mention to Seville. But please send nothing to me or the chancellor without first checking where in the world we are, for our destination is still uncertain. I have not seen the booksellers you recommend; if they come, I shall make them understand how much they gain by a recommendation from Erasmus. Farewell.

Barcelona

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4 Cf Ep 2094 n8.

5 A remark seemingly out of nowhere. One can only speculate that in the missing letter of 6 April (lines 2–3 above), Erasmus voiced the suspicion that Carvajal's attack had been inspired by his old enemy Girolamo Aleandro, perhaps indirectly through contact in Paris with Aleandro's ally Alberto Pio; see Allen Ep 2329:94–106, and cf Ep 2143 n1.

6 The anonymous letter mentioned in Carvajal's *Apologia* was the *Epistola de un celoso de Erasmo*; cf Ep 2126:142–4. Allen (28n) speculated that the author might have been Estéban Gabriel Merino (d 1535), bishop of Jaen, who was a warm admirer of Erasmus. But Bataillon (350–1 n3) has argued more plausibly that the author was likely Diego Cabrero, bishop of Huesca, who had strongly supported Erasmus at the Valladolid conference of 1527. (CEBR 1 237 lists Cabrero incorrectly as 'Cabrera.')

7 See Ep 2126:10–21.

8 Epp 2003:94–6, 2004:40–1

9 Ie the new ten-volume edition of Augustine (Ep 2157); see Epp 2126:195–6.

2199 / To Bonifacius Amerbach [Freiburg], 20 July [1529]

This letter (= AK Ep 1368) is Erasmus' reply to Ep 2194. The autograph is in the Öffentliche Bibliothek of the University of Basel (MS AN III 15 71). It was first published by Allen.

Greetings. There would have been no need for haste about the money, even supposing it had remained in your keeping, if the thought of war had not terrified me. Once this threat was removed,[1] I considered the money as good as in my hands.[2] As for your owing everything to me (you like to indulge in these courteous little falsehoods, though in other respects you are the least dishonest of men) I would not dare to give you advice if I could foresee any good coming out of these opening forays. I do hope my forebodings are mistaken! I had written to Zasius in the hope there could be some way of chaining you here in fetters you would find attractive.[3] He replied that this was not possible because you are weighed down by your possessions and would never lift your hand from your breast. This looks like an adage, but I do not fully understand what it means.[4] In any case a move cannot take place without cost to one's pocket. Yet it is hard to put up with the government you have. They boast about their university. Where are their students? The Evangelicals are not interested. Others will not come unless they wish to be branded as heretics. What they needed in Basel was someone to teach Scythian law, not Roman law.[5]

I congratulate Alciati,[6] but they say that the plague is rampant in Bourges. So I learn in letters from several young people, who went there,

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2199

1 The danger posed by the First Kappel War in Switzerland had passed with the signing of a peace on 25 June; see Ep 2173 n10.

2 Cf Epp 2183:7–14, 2194:1–6.

3 The phrase is taken from Horace *Odes* 4.11.23–4, where it is used of the fetters of love. The letter to Zasius is not extant.

4 This is not in the *Adagia*, nor could the editors find it anywhere else. Allen surmised that to lift one's hand from one's breast was to indicate submission and that the meaning was perhaps that Bonifacius was too tied to Basel to be able to leave it behind.

5 The Scythians were the proverbial barbarians; see *Adagia* I iv 85. For 'Roman law' Erasmus writes *ius Caesareum*, literally 'imperial law.' The reference is to the *Corpus iuris civilis* of Justinian, the codification of Roman law that was the basis of the teaching of civil law in the universities.

6 See Ep 2194 n4.

attracted by the trumpet call of a famous name.[7] Best wishes to you and all your family!

On the feast of St Margaret

To the honourable Master Bonifacius Amerbach. In Basel

2200 / To Maximilian of Burgundy Freiburg, 23 July 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*.

On Maximilian II of Burgundy, see Ep 1927 introduction. The year's delay in his appointment to the court of the cardinal of Liège (Ep 1984:22–6) was now up and life at court beckoned.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE NOBLE YOUTH MAXIMILIAN OF BURGUNDY, GREETING

I hoped, my dearest Maximilian, that with your fine abilities you would continue for a year or two more to play in the green meadows of the Muses, so that you would bring to the court a mind better fortified by the lessons of philosophy to serve as an antidote against Circe's spells.[1] But since your excellent father decided otherwise – and I do not doubt he has good reasons for his decision – all I can do is warn you out of my concern for you and beg you out of my affection for you that, amid all the delights of the court, you return from time to time, even secretly, to the pursuit of learning. It has not escaped me that great courts, like a vast forest, nurture creatures of various kinds. But it will be in keeping with your nature to preserve the integrity of your character even in the company of the corrupt. Even in a dunghill, gold is still gold; a diamond does not change its nature when lying in the mud. If ever you have reason to fear the taint of poison, you must bite hard on the remedy. That you should seek in the unguents of philosophy. For a time stupid Calphurnians will laugh at you;[2] just laugh at them in return. If they judge it the mark of a true courtier to know nothing of humane learning, they will soon realize their folly when they reflect on the sort of

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7 Doubtless Viglius Zuichemus and Karel Sucket, both of whom had followed Alciati from Avignon to Bourges; see Epp 2168, 2191.

2200

1 Circe's magic potions, consumed at her voluptuous court on the isle of Aeaea, turned all of Ulysses' warriors into swine. See Homer *Odyssey* 10.133–574; and cf *Adagia* IV ix 43.

2 An obvious reference to the man with the silly laugh in Persius *Satires* 5.189–90 who is usually referred to as Vulpennius (or some variant thereof)

courts once held by many kings and every Roman emperor. Although their example has been allowed to lapse among us for many generations, yet today even princely courts have learned to honour learning, now that princes themselves have turned to philosophy.

Some time ago I wrote a few words of recommendation to Jan of Borsele on behalf of this secretary of mine, Quirinus Talesius.[3] Now I commend him to you, but without wishing to put pressure on you by my commendation. He is a young man of loyal and pleasant character, with a better command of Greek and Latin than he reveals on first acquaintance. He is endowed with a rare modesty, which means that there is more beneath the surface than meets the eye. For many years he has been very useful to me; I have scarcely found anyone who served me as faithfully and as lovingly as he. He is as hard as a diamond in his pursuit of learning – the physician Hubertus Barlandus used to call him 'the Marian mule.'[4] I have given him unsparingly the thing that I value most highly. As for money, I am not a rich man and cannot therefore be lavish, though I think he has no complaints about my generosity.[5] But when it comes to supplying him with a steady income, a rich benefice or a position at court, I have nothing to offer except a recommendation. So when you write to your father, prince of Veere,[6] do please put in a word for Talesius. Believe me you will be doing a good turn to a young man who is neither undeserving nor ungrateful. If he lets you down – which I know will not happen – you can hold me as his guarantor. I send you my best wishes, my illustrious young friend.

Your *Pronunciation*, which I have revised and considerably enlarged, is being reprinted.[7]

Freiburg im Breisgau, 23 July AD 1529

2201 / To Andrzej Krzycki Freiburg, 23 July 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. On Krzycki, see Ep 2174.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE ANDRZEJ KRZYCKI, LORD BISHOP OF PŁOCK, GREETING

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3 Talesius (Ep 1966), the courier who delivered this letter, had delivered the earlier letter (not extant) to Jan Becker of Borsele; see Ep 1984:1–2, 27–9.
4 Ie the patient mule of the Roman general C. Marius; see *Adagia* IV iv 79.
5 See Ep 2113.
6 Adolph of Burgundy (Ep 93)
7 *De recta pronuntiatione* was dedicated to Maximilian; see Epp 1949, 2209.

I wrote to you two months ago, but my letter, which was delivered by a courier not well known to me, was brief and carelessly written.[1] So I decided to write you again on the same subject, especially since we are separated by so great a distance that we cannot count on letters moving reliably back and forth; indeed even Rumour, in spite of having wings over its whole body (if we are to believe Virgil),[2] scarcely ever penetrates here with news from your country, and if it does reach us, the news we want to hear is likely to arrive too late.

If you take into consideration only my good intentions, then perhaps there would be some reason to thank me; but if you count the actual services I performed for Andrzej Zebrzydowski,[3] what a very small sum the total is! First of all, I had not thoroughly examined the young man's abilities, which is the prime necessity for anyone who wishes to deal with an alert and gifted mind. Just when we had got to know one another, and each of us was in a better position to assist and give pleasure to the other, at that point he was seized with the desire to visit France. Since I knew that this was no frivolous fancy, I did not strongly oppose his plan, and I believe he has no reason to repent of the move. He paid his respects to the king, met some very great scholars, and attended lectures by eminent professors. Moreover it is not a negligible advantage to have gained some acquaintance with French ways and the French language.

He did not remain there for many months, but eagerly returned to Basel,[4] intending to spend a whole year with me in the study of humane letters. This would have pleased me greatly, if only because I could do something to repay the help and affection shown me by two prelates.[5] But as soon as Zebrzydowski caught a hint that things had turned nasty in Basel,[6] he was afraid that trouble would break out, and having found a congenial travelling companion in that learned, noble, and wise young man Karel Uutenhove, he changed his plans and set off with him to Padua.[7] The university

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2201

1 Ep 2174 had been dispatched six and one-half weeks earlier. On the courier, see n10 in that letter.
2 *Aeneid* 4.180–1
3 See Ep 2173 n6.
4 Not before 23 December 1528; see Ep 2078.
5 Ie by Krzycki and by Piotr Tomicki (Ep 2173), bishop of Cracow and Zebrzydowski's great-uncle
6 See following paragraph.
7 In February 1529; see Ep 2188 n1.

there has, besides other fine scholars, Niccolò Leonico and Pietro Bembo, two of the chief luminaries of the age.[8] I approved the plan, though the fact that the journey was not too safe made me anxious.

The decision turned out more fortunate for him than I anticipated; for before Christmas a drama began to unfold in Basel such as I had never seen before in my life.[9] If Zebrzydowski had been here in the midst of it, though possibly he would not have been in danger, he would certainly have been badly frightened. The climax in this drama, however, led to a gentler denouement than we expected. No house was broken into and no one was injured by the sword. The only incident involved the burgomaster, a close neighbour of mine, who slipped away secretly at night, not like Saint Paul in a basket,[10] but in a skiff, and so escaped from their clutches. Otherwise, he was to be hanged in the town square (this at least is the story they tell – and boast about); his only fault was that his eloquence had stood in the way of the 'gospel,' which at that time was eager to make progress.[11] But a ferocious and destructive attack was launched against the altars, statues, and pictures – a cruel act to be sure, but carried out without the spilling of blood. We read that St Francis drove a man mad who sneered at the five wounds;[12] we are also told of many cases where other saints made a horrible example of those who were guilty of irreligious utterances. Such stories have made me wonder why out of this large number there was no one to punish the perpetrators of such massive destruction – the gentleness of Christ and the Blessed Virgin does not of course surprise me.

It was neither convenient nor safe for me to move house in winter or during the height of the disturbances. So I waited for the swallows before moving to Freiburg – I refer to the town in the Breisgau in the jurisdiction of Ferdinand, about a day's journey from Basel. Apart from everything else its proximity commended it to me, for I was apprehensive that my poor body could not tolerate a longer move. But it proved most successful; for the move was beneficial to my health, and I have found the climate so suited to me that I seem somehow to have regained my youth.[13]

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8 On Niccolò Leonico Tomeo see Ep 1479 n70; on Bembo, Ep 2106.
9 See Ep 2097 n1.
10 Acts 9:25; 2 Cor 11:33
11 See Ep 2112 n17.
12 We have had no success in tracking down this reference. It is not in *The Little Flowers of St Francis*, *The Life of St Francis of Assisi* by St Bonaventure, or *The Golden Legend* of Jacobus de Voragine.
13 See Ep 2151 n1.

In place of Zebrzydowski, whose company I was not privileged to enjoy for very long, I now have Marcin Dąbrówski,[14] whom you had wisely sent as a companion for your nephew. He is a young man, but he has the wisdom of maturity; he possesses a gentle and pleasing personality and is sensible and disciplined, modest not only in his way of life but also in his speech. The frugality of my Diogenes-like table[15] is much more agreeable to him than all the parties, games, and dances of the young. He is miserly only about one thing – his time; at hardly any part of the day is he separated from his books. He will return to you, I hope, not unworthy of the favour of men like yourself. Certainly, as I indicated in my earlier letter, he showed such loyalty, concern, vigilance, and civility towards Zebrzydowski that he could not have been a more loving companion if he had been his brother; nor could he have shown himself more obedient and obliging if he had been his slave. In this one person Zebrzydowski had a friend, a servant, an adviser, and a helper in his studies. So I have no doubt that, being the kindly man you are, you will do what you can for Marcin's advancement if ever the opportunity arises.

Everything else here has turned out to my satisfaction. I have now got used to the high prices. We are free from war, though not from the fear of war.[16] The emperor is launching his thunderbolts in Italy.[17] Here everything is in a state of suspense, with strong forces working for radical change.[18] Meanwhile we are poised between hope and fear. How often I have wished I were suddenly set down in Cracow, but taken there as the angel brought Habakkuk by the hair to Daniel in Babylon[19] or as Mercury carried Menippus from heaven to Athens.[20] But, as Homer says, it is wrong to talk windy nonsense.[21]

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14 Marcin Słap Dąbrówski (Ep 2078 n12, Allen Ep 2351).
15 Cf Ep 2073:28–31.
16 The immediate danger posed by the First Kappel War had now passed; see Ep 2173 n10.
17 See Ep 2193 n14.
18 'Here' presumably means Germany, where the antagonism between the Catholic and Protestant princes and cities was already a theat to public peace; see Ep 2107 n1.
19 Dan 14:32–8 (Vulgate) = Bel and the Dragon 33–9 (Apocrypha)
20 Lucian *Icaromenippus* 34. In this dialogue Lucian depicts the Cynic satirist Menippus (third century BC) as having devised a set of wings with which he flew to Olympus on an errand to Zeus, an adventure that ended with Mercury taking him by the ear and delivering him back to Athens.
21 *Odyssey* 11.464

What support I won among you as an encomiast of peace I do not know; certainly I convinced none of those whom I particularly wished to influence.[22] You laugh at the scurrilous attack made on my salutation, but you will understand that it was no laughing matter if you read the Apology that I am enclosing for you in this letter. This was the first of Béda's articles: in dedicating the *Paraphrase on Luke* I added in the salutation 'king of England and France' because, part of France once having been under the control of the English, that is the title which kings of that island engrave on their national coinage.[23] Have we any reason to fear for the church of God when she has such vigilant guardians?[24]

Please do not worry about a gift.[25] I think I have already received what in your generosity you wished to give.[26] Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 23 July 1529

2202 / To Nicolaus Episcopius

Freiburg, 7 August 1529

This letter was first published in the *Opus epistolarum*. Nicolaus Episcopius (Ep 1714), was the friend and business partner of Hieronymus Froben, whose sister Justina he had just married.

ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO NICOLAUS EPISCOPIUS, GREETING

There is no reason for you to thank me, my dearest Episcopius; but I would be more boorish than the whole tribe of Scythians if I failed to respond with an answering affection to a generous heart like yours, which has shown itself so friendly and so ready to help.[1] Politeness demanded that on my departure

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22 See Ep 2109 n14.

23 Cf Ep 1909 n25. In the dedicatory letter for the *Paraphrase on Luke* (Ep 1381) Erasmus addressed Henry VIII as 'most invincible king of England and France,' which Béda denounced as an affront to the French. This was the first of Béda's complaints about the Luke Paraphrase to which Erasmus responded in the *Divinationes ad notata Bedae*, which were published with the *Supputationes errorum in censuris Natalis Bedae* in 1527. See LB IX 489A–B. This was evidently the 'Apology' included with the letter (not the *Responsio ad notulas Bedae* of March 1529 as indicated by Allen).

24 Cf Allen Ep 2205:258–9 and LB IX 709B (*Responsio ad notulas Bedaicas*).

25 See Ep 2174 n9.

26 The intended meaning here seems to be that expressed in Ep 2030:39–41, ie that by sending his nephew Zebrzydowski to Erasmus, Krzycki had already presented him with a gift.

2202

1 On the proverbially boorish Scythians, see *Adagia* IV ix 85.

from Basel I should leave you some pledge of our friendship; but you know yourself that the move was attended with much worry and confusion, which drove from my mind all thought of the ordinary courtesies.

So that you may be readier to excuse my discourtesy, let me tell you that I gave nothing at all to anyone. My belongings had gone on ahead and I was finally embarking on the ship when I remembered Episcopius and his young bride Justina. I have loved her modest character right from her childhood, and as she grew in age, so she increased in what is a young woman's principal asset, a becoming shyness and a sense of decency. It was not without reason that among other girls she was judged the prime exemplar of maidenly modesty. So since nothing remained to me in the house except a rooster and a hen with her brood of clucking chickens, I decided to give them to you as an amusing but not, I think, an ill-omened gift.[2] I commended it in an extemporary distich that has not much more merit than the gift. Here it is:

> By birth you're French, a cock with a fair young mate;
> I hope my gift portends a happy fate.
> I send you as I leave a farmyard cock,
> Whose consort fosters nervously her flock.[3]

I am glad the little verses reached you, and I recognize your characteristic kindness in thanking me so thoughtfully for such a badly turned poem.

I am sorry that the gift was intercepted. I cannot say I was greatly surprised at the impudence of my old servant,[4] who habitually gives away my things to anyone she pleases. She acts in so familiar a manner, although we have never slept in the same bed. Her impertinence would be insufferable

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2 Why would the gift of a rooster (*gallus*) and a hen (*gallina*) be ill-omened? Gerlo (VIII 321 n2) suggests that Erasmus was playing on another meaning of *gallus*, ie 'priest of Cybele.' Her priests were castrated.

3 The joke in Erasmus' untranslatable distich, here given in a free version as a quatrain, depends on the punning use of *gallus* in its two most common meanings: 'Frenchman' and 'rooster' or 'cock.' Though born in Alsace, Episcopius appears to have arrived in Basel from Montdidier in Bresse and was thus deemed 'French.' Taken literally, the distich means: 'You are a Frenchman/cock (*gallus*) and you have a hen (*gallina*). I give you as a happy omen a cock (*gallus*), whose mate fosters anxiously her tender brood.' For another translation and commentary see CWE 85 and 86, poem 80. The distich consists of two dactylic hexameters.

4 Margarete Büsslin (cf Ep 1371:21), Erasmus' housekeeper, who was the inspiration for Margaret, that sharp-tongued, troublesome maid in the colloquy *Convivium poeticum* 'The Poetic Feast'; see CWE 39 390.

if she had been unaware that I intended the gift for someone else, but the fact is that she was warned time and again by my friend Kan not to do so,[5] but nonetheless acted as she wished. When I discovered from your letter what had happened, I began to scold the servants for allowing this to happen. They replied that she had been warned, but to no effect. I was not yet satisfied and flung back at them, 'In that case you should have let fly at the witch's hair – or at least reported the matter to me.' Kan replied that she had tricked them: she had promised she would do what she was told and pretended to be going to your house, but went instead where she had intended. Now you are thinking she must have blushed when she was reprimanded for what she did. She no more turned pink than an ass does when it tosses its burden from its back. These experiences would be utterly intolerable if I had not grown used to them. This Xanthippe of mine plays such tricks on me often[6] – I keep her to teach me tolerance. I do not argue with her much so as not to waste my time, since I do not think that even Prometheus could refashion this woman or Vulcan remake her in his forge. But I don't care if the gift has been lost, provided the omen is not lost as well.

I sent both of you my sincere congratulations on the sacred bond of marriage that has joined together such a well-matched pair, chaste to chaste, kindly to kindly, honest to honest. I hope I shall have even better grounds for congratulations when a little young Episcopius will be playing in your halls,[7] whose similarity of features will recall both of you – and not just you, but also my very dear friend Johann Froben. Nature, you know, often paints the grandparents' image on the grandchildren too.

I hear that you are going to move into the house made vacant by my departure,[8] a house in which I spent so many more years than I spent in any city since my birth, and which the generosity of your father-in-law often tried to force on me as a gift. I am delighted to hear the news. For what more blessed couple could I have wished to succeed me after my long and much appreciated tenancy?

You wanted Hieronymus to commend you further to me. My excellent friend, you need no commendation from anyone, since for a long time now you have justly earned the highest commendation by the integrity of your

* * * * *

5 Nicolaas Kan (Ep 1832)
6 Xanthippe was the shrewish wife of Socrates.
7 Cf Virgil *Aeneid* 4.328–9: 'some little Aeneas to play in my halls.' Their eldest son Nicolas was born c 1531–2.
8 See Ep 1316 n10.

character, your loyalty, and the not inconsiderable services you have done me. My best wishes to you and your charming wife.

Freiburg, 7 August 1529

2203 / To the Reader

Freiburg, 7 August 1529

First published in the *Opus epistolarum*, this is the preface to that volume, which included all the letters previously published plus over four hundred new ones. It was in press in May (Ep 2161:53); by the end of July Oecolampadius had learned of its printing (BAO Ep 769); by 7 September Erasmus had ordered a copy sent to Pirckheimer (Allen Ep 2214:1–3); and by 6 October Glareanus had seen the book (see Allen's introduction). As the text of this letter indicates, Erasmus had no sense of the importance of letters as raw material for history and did not welcome the drudgery of working them over. So, much to the distress of later editors and scholars, he took far less trouble over the preparation of the volume than he otherwise might have, refusing to arrange the letters in chronological order and supplying more than half of them with demonstrably false dates. See Allen I 596 (Appendix 7 'The Principal Editions of Erasmus' Epistolae'); CWE 1 xxi–xxii.

DESIDERIUS ERASMUS OF ROTTERDAM TO THE READER, GREETING

I have stated in the past that none of my works gives me less satisfaction than my letters.[1] I have now re-examined why this should be so, but my conclusions are the same as they were before. When, however, Hieronymus Froben assured me that for two years now scholars have been inquiring after the whole corpus of my letters, I reviewed what had already been printed and added a not inconsiderable supplement. That is the sort of person I am, gentle reader: I am incapable of denying anything to those whom I dearly love.

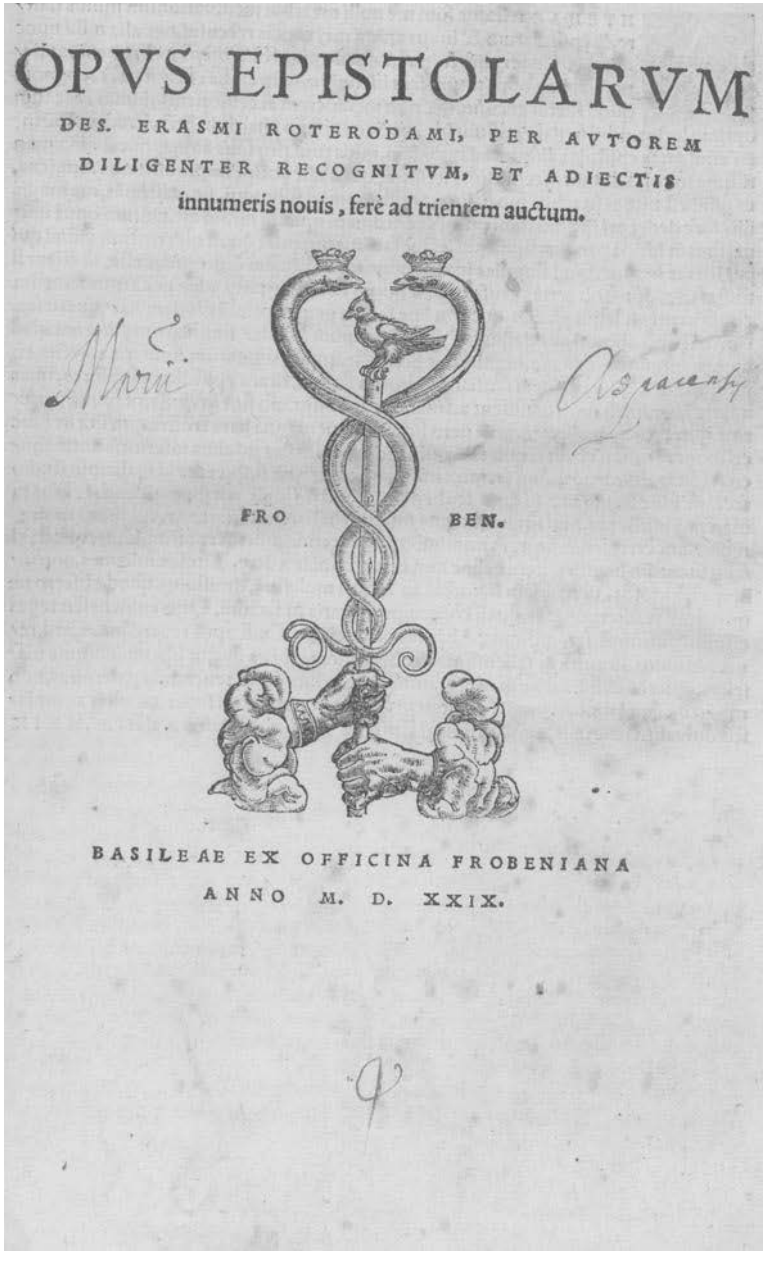
Included in the published letters were several written in most affectionate and complimentary terms to men whom I then considered my loyal friends but from whom I now suffer the most bitter enmity.[2] There is nothing in the affairs of men that can safely be relied on. Nonetheless, I have not removed any of these letters, thinking they will bring more disgrace

* * * * *

2203

1 See Ep 1341A:627–8. See also Ep 1206, the preface to the *Epistolae ad diversos*.

2 Eg Ep 920 (Ludovicus Carinus); Epp 645, 714, 759, 811–12, 1141 (Gerard Geldenhouwer), Epp 951, 999 (Ulrich von Hutten); Epp 768, 931 (Wilhelm Nesen)



Title-page of Erasmus *Opus epistolarum* (Basel: Froben 1529)
Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies
Victoria University, University of Toronto

than honour to those concerned. I decided not to change the order; the only change I made was to divide the whole work into books so that the reader can find what he is looking for more easily. Some friends wrote to me to suggest that the letters should be arranged in chronological order,[3] but even if that had been easy to do, there are reasons why I did not think it wise. Similarly, I decided against an arrangement by subject matter because in this kind of writing the main attraction lies in its variety. Furthermore, for anyone who wants this sort of information I have added the day and year at the end of each letter. I have also prefaced the work with an index including the names of the correspondents and the page numbers to show who writes to whom and how often. There were several letters that I would like to have included if they had come to hand. My move was responsible for the loss of much that I would have preferred to keep; everything was in such a state of confusion that many of these letters were sought in vain. I thought it right to issue this warning so that if anyone is upset because a letter written to him does not appear, while he sees that letters written to other less intimate friends are included, he should not suspect that this is the result of deliberate malice.

In this age nothing could be written without offending someone or other. I have done everything in my power to see that letters that contain a lot of bitterness are either omitted or at least toned down. I have willingly held back from attacking people's good name. I only wish this had been always possible, but in that case the result would not be a volume of letters. I have omitted the usual formulae of address as being not only pretentious but silly and bothersome to the reader. I beg the reader not to misconstrue this as evidence of contempt. Surely everybody knows that kings are 'invincible,' and 'most serene,' abbots are 'venerable,' bishops are 'right reverend,' popes are 'most holy' and 'blessed.' All these titles, like the following: 'invincible majesty,' 'most reverend lordship,' 'most gracious highness,' and 'reverend paternity,' not only spoil the purity of the Latin language but burden the reader with tiresome and superfluous baggage. Farewell.

Freiburg im Breisgau, 7 August 1529

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3 See Epp 1787:22–44, 1851:31–4.

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Allen	*Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami* ed P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen, and H.W. Garrod (Oxford 1906–58) 11 vols and index
Analecta Belgica	C.P. Hoynck van Papendrecht *Analecta Belgica* 3 vols in 6 (The Hague 1743)
ASD	*Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Amsterdam 1969–)
BAO	*Briefe und Akten zum Leben Oekolampads* ed Ernst Staehelin 2 vols, Quellen und Forschungen zur Reformationsgeschichte 10 and 19 (Leipzig 1927–34; repr New York/London 1971)
Bataillon	Marcel Bataillon *Érasme et l'Espagne: recherches sur l'histoire spirituelle du XVIe siècle* (Paris 1937) = vol 1 of *Érasme et l'Espagne*: *Nouvelle édition en trois volumes* ed Daniel Devoto and Charles Amiel (Geneva 1991)
Bibliotheca Belgica	*Bibliotheca Belgica: Bibliographie générale des Pays-Bas* ed Ferdinand van der Haeghen, re-ed Marie-Thérèse Lenger (Brussels 1964–75; repr Brussels 1979) 7 vols
Bourgeois de Paris	*Le Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris sous le règne de François Ier (1515–1536)* ed V.-L. Bourilly (Paris 1910)
Brown *Augustine*	Peter Brown *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1969)
Burckhardt	Theophilus Burckhardt-Biedermann *Bonifacius Amerbach und die Reformation* (Basel 1894)
Caballero	Fermín Caballero *Alonso y Juan de Valdés* (Madrid 1875; repr Cuenca 1995)
CEBR	*Contemporaries of Erasmus*: *A Biographical Register of the Renaissance and Reformation* ed Peter G. Bietenholz and Thomas B. Deutscher (Toronto 1985–7) 3 vols
CWE	*Collected Works of Erasmus* (Toronto 1974–)
Enthoven	*Briefe an Desiderius Erasmus von Rotterdam* ed L.K. Enthoven (Strasbourg 1906)

Epistolae ad diversos	*Epistolae D. Erasmi Roterodami ad diversos et aliquot aliorum ad illum* (Basel: Froben, 31 August 1521)
Epistolae familiares	*Epistolae familiares Des. Erasmi Roterodami ad Bonif. Amerbachium* (Basel: C.A. Serin 1779)
Epistolae floridae	*Des. Erasmi Roterodami epistolarum floridarum liber unus antehac nunquam excusus* (Basel: J. Herwagen, September 1531)
Farge 'Berquin'	James K. Farge 'Les procès de Louis de Berquin: Épisodes dan la lutte du Parlement de Paris contra l'absolutisme royal' *Histoire et Archives* 18 (2005) 49–77
Farrago	*Farrago nova epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami ad alios, et aliorum ad hunc . . .* (Basel: Froben, October 1519)
Förstemann/Günther	*Briefe an Desiderius Erasmus von Rotterdam* ed. J. Förstemann and O. Günther XXVII. Beiheft zum *Zentralblatt für Bibliothekwesen* (Leipzig 1904)
Gerlo	*La correspondence d'Érasme traduite et annotée d'après l'Opus epistolarum de P.S. Allen, H.M. Allen et H.W. Garrod* ed and trans Aloïs Gerlo et al 12 vols (Brussels 1967–84)
LB	*Desiderii Erasmi opera omnia* ed. J. Leclerc (Leiden 1703–6; repr 1961–2) 10 vols
LW	*Luther's Works* ed Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut T. Lehmann, et al (St Louis / Philadelphia 1955–86) 55 vols
Major	Emil Major *Erasmus von Rotterdam*, no 1 in the series *Virorum illustrium reliquiae* (Basel 1926)
Opus epistolarum	*Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami per autorem diligenter recognitum et adjectis innumeris novis fere ad trientem auctum* (Basel: Froben, Herwagen, and Episcopius 1529)
Pastor	Ludwig von Pastor *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages* ed and trans R.F. Kerr et al 6th ed (London 1938–53) 40 vols
Pirckheimeri opera	*Billibaldi Pirckheimeri . . . opera politica, historica, philologica et epistolica* ed Melchior Goldast (Frankfurt 1610; repr Hildesheim / New York 1969)

PL	*Patrologiae cursus completus . . . series Latina* ed J.-P. Migne, 1st ed (Paris 1844–55, 1862–5; repr Turnhout) 217 vols plus 4 vols indexes. In the notes, references to volumes of PL in which column numbers in the first edition are different from those in later editions or reprints include the date of the edition cited.
Sieber	Ludwig Sieber *Das Mobiliar des Erasmus: Verzeichnis vom 10. April 1534* (Basel 1891)
WA	*D. Martin Luthers Werke, Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (Weimar 1930–80) 60 vols
WPB	*Willibald Pirckheimers Briefwechsel* ed Emil Reicke, Helga Scheible, et al 7 vols (Munich 1940–2009)

SHORT-TITLE FORMS FOR ERASMUS' WORKS

Titles following colons are longer versions of the same, or are alternative titles. Items entirely enclosed in square brackets are of doubtful authorship. For abbreviations, see Works Frequently Cited.

Acta: Acta Academiae Lovaniensis contra Lutherum *Opuscula* / CWE 71
Adagia: Adagiorum chiliades 1508, etc (Adagiorum collectanea for the primitive form, when required) LB II / ASD II-1–8 / CWE 30–6
Admonitio adversus mendacium: Admonitio adversus mendacium et obtrectationem LB X / CWE 78
Annotationes in Novum Testamentum LB VI / ASD VI-5, 6, 8, 9 / CWE 51–60
Antibarbari LB X / ASD I-1 / CWE 23
Apologia ad annotationes Stunicae: Apologia respondens ad ea quae Iacobus Lopis Stunica taxaverat in prima duntaxat Novi Testamenti aeditione LB IX / ASD IX-2
Apologia ad Caranzam: Apologia ad Sanctium Caranzam, or Apologia de tribus locis, or Responsio ad annotationem Stunicae ... a Sanctio Caranza defensam LB IX
Apologia ad Fabrum: Apologia ad Iacobum Fabrum Stapulensem LB IX / ASD IX-3 / CWE 83
Apologia ad prodromon Stunicae LB IX
Apologia ad Stunicae conclusiones LB IX
Apologia adversus monachos: Apologia adversus monachos quosdam Hispanos LB IX
Apologia adversus Petrum Sutorem: Apologia adversus debacchationes Petri Sutoris LB IX
Apologia adversus rhapsodias Alberti Pii: Apologia ad viginti et quattuor libros A. Pii LB IX / CWE 84
Apologia adversus Stunicae Blasphemiae: Apologia adversus libellum Stunicae cui titulum fecit Blasphemiae et impietates Erasmi LB IX
Apologia contra Latomi dialogum: Apologia contra Iacobi Latomi dialogum de tribus linguis LB IX / CWE 71
Apologia de 'In principio erat sermo' LB IX
Apologia de laude matrimonii: Apologia pro declamatione de laude matrimonii LB IX / CWE 71
Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem': Apologia de loco 'Omnes quidem resurgemus' LB IX
Apologia qua respondet invectivis Lei: Apologia qua respondet duabus invectivis Eduardi Lei *Opuscula* / ASD IX-4 / CWE 72
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Appendix de scriptis Clithovei LB IX / CWE 83
Appendix respondens ad Sutorem: Appendix respondens ad quaedam Antapologiae Petri Sutoris LB IX
Argumenta: Argumenta in omnes epistolas apostolicas nova (with Paraphrases)
Axiomata pro causa Lutheri: Axiomata pro causa Martini Lutheri *Opuscula* CWE 71

Brevissima scholia: In Elenchum Alberti Pii brevissima scholia per eundem Erasmum Roterodamum CWE 84

Carmina LB I, IV, V, VIII / ASD I-7 / CWE 85–6
Catalogus lucubrationum LB I / CWE 9 (Ep 1341A)
Ciceronianus: Dialogus Ciceronianus LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 28
Colloquia LB I / ASD I-3 / CWE 39–40
Compendium vitae Allen I / CWE 4
Conflictus: Conflictus Thaliae et Barbariei LB I
[Consilium: Consilium cuiusdam ex animo cupientis esse consultum] *Opuscula* / CWE 71

De bello Turcico: Utilissima consultatio de bello Turcis inferendo, et obiter enarratus psalmus 28 LB V / ASD V-3 / CWE 64
De civilitate: De civilitate morum puerilium LB I / CWE 25
Declamatio de morte LB IV
Declamatiuncula LB IV
Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas: Declarationes ad censuras Lutetiae vulgatas sub nomine facultatis theologiae Parisiensis LB IX
De concordia: De sarcienda ecclesiae concordia, or De amabili ecclesiae concordia [on Psalm 83] LB V / ASD V-3 / CWE 65
De conscribendis epistolis LB I / ASD I-2 / CWE 25
De constructione: De constructione octo partium orationis, or Syntaxis LB I / ASD I-4
De contemptu mundi: Epistola de contemptu mundi LB V / ASD V-1 / CWE 66
De copia: De duplici copia verborum ac rerum LB I / ASD I-6 / CWE 24
De esu carnium: Epistola apologetica ad Christophorum episcopum Basiliensem de interdicto esu carnium LB IX / ASD IX-1
De immensa Dei misericordia: Concio de immensa Dei misericordia LB V / CWE 70
De libero arbitrio: De libero arbitrio diatribe LB IX / CWE 76
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